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DEFORMITIES

OF

DR SAMUEL JOHNSON.

SELECTED FROM HIS WORKS.

Nihil rerum mortalium tam instabile ac fluxum est, quam fama—
TACITUS.

A Narrative which aims at Simplicity and which is ambitious to
record the Truth.

Dr STUART.

EDINBURGH:

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INTRODUCTION.

WHEN a boy peruses a book with pleasure, his admiration riseth immediately from the work to it's author. His fancy fondly ranks his favourite with the wise, and the virtuous. He glows with a lover's impatience, to reach the presence of this *superior being*, to drink of science at the fountain-head, to complete his ideas at once, and riot in the luxuries of learning.

The novice unhappily presumes that men who command the passions of others cannot be slaves to their own : That a historian must feel the worth of justice and tenderness, while he tells us, how kings and conquerors are commonly the burden and the curse of society : That an assertor of public freedom will never become the dupe of flattery, and the pimp of oppression : That the founder of a system cannot want words to explain it : *That* the compiler of a *dictionary* has at least a common degree of knowledge : *That* an inventor of *new terms* can tell what they mean : *That* he, who refines and fixes the language of empires, is able to converse, without the pertness of a pedant, or the vulgarity of a porter : *That* a preacher of morality will blush to persist in vindictive, deliberate, and detected falsehoods : *That* he who totters on the brink of eternity will speak with caution and humanity of the dead : And *that* a traveller, who pretends to veracity, dares not avow contradictions.

But in learning, as in life, much of our happiness flows from deception. Ignorance, the parent of wonder, is often the parent of esteem and love. While devouring Horace we venerate the Defenter of Brutus, and the Slave of Cæsar. Transported by his sublime eloquence, the reader of Cicero forgets that Cicero himself was a plagiarist and a coward : That Rome was but a den of robbers : That Cataline resembled the rest ; and that this rebel was only revenging the blood of butchered nations ; of Samnium, of Epirus, of Carthage, and of—HANNIBAL.

The

' The laurels which human praise confers are withered and ' blasted by the unworthiness of those who wear them.' There is often a curious contrast between an author and his books. A theorist pens a volume to display the beauties of benevolence, though they never cost him a shilling. A party-tool talks of public spirit. A pedant commands our tears. A pensioner inveighs against pensions; and a bankrupt preaches public œconomy. The philosopher quotes Horace, while he defrauds his valet. A mimick of *Richardson*, is a domestic tyrant: A *Sydenham*, Pandora's box: A declaimer against envy, of all men the most invidious. The satirist has not a reformer's virtues. The poet of love and friendship is without a mistress, or a friend; while a time-server celebrates the valour of heroes, and exults in the *freedom* of England. Like *Penelope*, most writers employ part of their time, to undo the labours of the rest. Judging by their lives one would think it their chief study to render learning ridiculous. We lose all respect for teachers, that, when the lesson is ended, are ' no ' wiser or better than common men.' To be convinced that books are trifles, let us only remark how little good they do, and how little those, who love them, love each other: The heroes of lettered fame, for the most part, regard a rival as an enemy. Their mutual hostilities, like those of aquatick animals, are unavoidable and constant; and their voracity differs from that of the fark, but as a half-devoured carcase, from a murdered reputation. The existence of very many books depends on the ruin of some of the rest; yet, with our *English Dictionary*, a few *immortal* compositions are to live unwounded by the shafts of envy, and to descend in a torrent of applause from one century to another. A thousand of their critics will daily be despoised. A thousand of their imitators will sink into contempt; but *they* shall defy the force of time; continue to flourish through every *fashion* of philosophy, and, like Egyptian pyramids, are to perish but in the ruins of the globe.

ERRATA. P. 3. l. 3. from the bottom, for *slavery* read *obedience*. P. 37. l. 16. from the top, dele *Bacon*. In p. 61. the Asterisk refers to the Life of Smith.

DEFORMITIES, &c.

IN the number of men who dishonour their own genius, may be ranked Dr Samuel Johnson; for his abilities and learning are not accompanied by candour and generosity. His life of Pomfret concludes with this maxim, that *he who pleases many, must have merit*; yet, in defiance of his own rule, the Doctor has, a thousand times, attempted to prove, that they who please many, have *no* merit. His invidious and revengeful remark on Chesterfield, would have disgraced any other man. He said, and nobody but himself would have said it, that Churchill was a shallow fellow. And he once told some of his admirers, that SWIFT was a *shallow*, a *very shallow* fellow; reminding us of the Lilliputian that drew his bow to Gulliver. Swift, by a very singular felicity, excelled both in verse and prose. He boasted, that no *new* word was to be found in his writings; though, in glory above all authors of his time, he did not fancy *that* entitled him to ingross or insult conversation. He was no less remarkably clean, than *some* are remarkably dirty. His love of fame never led him into the lowest of all vices; and a sense of his own dignity made him respect the importance and the feelings of others. He often went many miles on foot, that he might be able to bestow what a coach would have cost him. He relieved some hundreds of families from beggary, by lending them five pounds a-piece only. He inspired his footmen with Celtic attachment. Whatever was his pride, he shewed none of it in 'the venerable presence of misery.' His intrepid eloquence first pointed out to his oppressed countrymen, that path to independence, which their posterity, at this moment, so happily pursue. 'His meanest talent was his wit.' His learning had no pedantry; his piety no superstition; his benevolence almost no parallel. For the memory of this man, who may be classed with Cato and Phocion, the Doctor feels no tenderness or respect.

And for *this* *, and other critical blasphemies, he has undergone innumerable floggings. No writer of this nation has made more noise: None has discovered more contempt for other men's reputations, or more confidence in his own. I would humbly submit a few hints for his improvement, if he be not 'too old to learn.' And, whatever freedom I take, the Doctor himself may be quoted as a precedent for insolent invective, and brutal reproach. He has told us †, that 'the two lowest of all human beings are, a scribbler for a party, and a commissioner of excise.' This very man is himself the hired author of a party; and *why must* a commissioner of excise be one of the meanest of mankind? In the preface to his octavo Dictionary, the Doctor affirms, that, 'by the labours of all his predecessors, not even the *lowest* expectation can be gratified.' The author of a revival of Shakespeare ‡ attacks (he says) with 'gloomy malignity, as if he were dragging to justice an assassin or incendiary. He bites like a viper, and would be glad to leave inflammations and gangrene behind him.' For this shocking language, which could have been answered by nothing but a blow, the *primum mobile*, perhaps, was, that the critic had dedicated his book to Lord Kaimes, (a Scotsman, and another very *shallow* fellow) 'as the truest judge, and most intelligent admirer of Shakespeare.'

His *admirable* Dictionary is, by some, believed to be the most capital monument of human genius. The studies of Archimedes and Newton are but like a feather in the scale with this amazing work. He has given our tongue a stability, which, without him, it never had known. He has performed, alone, what, in other nations, whole academies fail to perform; and, as the fruit of his learning and sagacity, our language will be classical and immortal. This may be true; but the book displays many proofs of his *malignity*, and evinces what I want to insist on, viz. that *he who despises politeness, cannot deserve it.* For his definitions of Excise, Gazetteer, Pension, and Pensioner †, he would,

* See parallel between Diogenes and Dr. Johnson in Town and Country Magazine. In his life of Swift, the Doctor tells us, that 'he rebuked without pity, and assisted without kindness.'

† Idler, No. 79.

‡ Preface to Shakespeare.

§ The following extracts from his Dictionary are a key to the Doctor's political tenets: EXCISE, a hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudg-

would, in Queen Anne's reign, have had a very fair chance of mounting the pillory. Hume and Smith and Chesterfield may be quoted to prove, that Walpole and Excise were improper objects of execration; but an emanation of royal munificence has, of late, relaxed the Doctor's *frigorific* virtue; and, in his *False Alarm*, he affirms, that our government approaches nearer to perfection, *than any other that fiction has feigned, or history recorded.* This is going pretty far; but the peevish, though *incorruptible* patriot, proceeds a great deal farther. His political pieces have elegance; yet, if the half of what he advances in them be true, his countrymen are a mob of ignorant ruffians, petulant, selfish, insolent, contemptuous, and brutal: Every member in Opposition is a fool, a firebrand, a monster; worse, if that were possible, than Ravillac, Hambden, or Milton.

From his volumes I am to select some passages, illustrate them with a few observations, and submit them to the reader's opinion.

He that writes the life of another, is either his friend or his enemy, and wishes either to exalt his praise, or aggravate his infamy.

ed. not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom *excise* is paid. *Gazetteer*, was lately a term of the utmost infamy, being usually applied to wretches that were hired to vindicate the court. *Pension*, an allowance made to any one without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country. *Pensioner*, a slave of state, hired by a stipend to obey his master. *King*, monarch, supreme governor. *Monarch*, a governor invested with absolute authority, a *King*. *Whig*, 1. whey, 2. the name of a faction. *Tory*, one who adheres to the *ancient* constitution of the state, and the apostolical hierarchy of the church of England, opposed to a *whig*. *Johnson's fol. Dic.* The word *faction* is always used in a bad sense; though, in defining it, the Doctor did not, and, after what he has said of a *whig*, perhaps durst not say, that a faction is always a term for the supposed disturbers of public peace. The most obsequious of the slaves of pride, the most rapturous of the gazers upon wealth, the most officious of the whisperers of greatness, are collected from seminaries appropriated to the study of wisdom and of virtue; *Rambler*, 180. That is to say, men of learning are a set of the most sneaking, pitiful, time-serving rascals. The reader will make his own applications.

* See *Political tracts* by the author of the *Rambler*. His character of Hambden, the reader will find in the 1st page of Waller's life. Of Milton, he says, that 'his impudence had been at least equal to his other powers. Such was his malignity, that hell grew darker at his frown. He thought women were born only for slavery, and men only for rebellion.' There is much more in the same tone; and, with what justice his epithets are applied, the reader will judge for himself.

‘ infamy *.’ The Doctor discovers impudence, at least equal to his other powers. After such a confession, what have we to hope for in *his* lives of English poets?

Having thus denied veracity both to Plutarch and to *himself*, this Idler, in the very next page, leaps at once from the wildest scepticism to the wildest credulity. The paragraph is too long for insertion; but the tenor of it is, that ‘ a man’s account of ‘ himself, left behind him unpublished, may be *depended on*;’ because, ‘ by self-love all have been so often betrayed, *that* ‘ (now for the climax of nonsense) all are on the watch against its artifices.’

In his Dictionary, *temperance* is defined to be, ‘ *moderation opposed to gluttony and drunkenness*.’ And he has since defined ‘ sobriety or temperance’ to be ‘ *nothing but the forbearance of pleasure* †.’ This maxim needs no comment.

‘ A man will, in the hour of darkness and fatigue, be content to leave behind him every thing but himself †.’ Here the Doctor supposes, that a person can leave himself behind himself. When the reader examines the passage in the original, he will be convinced, that this cannot be an error of the press only. Had the Rambler, when he crossed Tweed, left behind him his pride, his indolence, his vulgarity, and his foul linen, he would have returned a much wiser, better, and happier man than he did.

Form, he explains to be, ‘ the external appearance of any ‘ thing, shape;’ but, when speaking of hills in the North of Scotland, he says, ‘ the appearance is that of matter incapable of form §!’ He has seen *matter*, not only destitute, but incapable of *shape*. He has seen an *appearance* that is incapable of *external* appearance. And yet, in the same book, he seems to regret the weakness of his vision.

Beauty is ‘ that assemblage of graces which pleases the eye.’ But, in the Idler ||, he displays his true idea of beauty; and it is a very lame piece of philosophy. The reader will judge from a few samples: ‘ If a man, born blind, was to recover ‘ his sight, and the most beautiful woman was brought before ‘ him, he could not determine whether she was handsome or not. ‘ Nor if the most handsome and most deformed were produced, ‘ could

* Idler, No. 85.

† Ibid. No. 89.

‡ Tour, p. 59.

§ Ibid. p. 84.

|| Idler, No. 82.

‘ could he any better determine to which he should give the preference, having seen only these two.’ And again, ‘ as we are then more accustomed to beauty than deformity, we may conclude *that to be the reason why we approve and admire it.*’ Moreover, ‘ though habit and custom cannot be said to be the cause of beauty, it is certainly the cause of our liking it. I have no doubt, but that, if we were more used to deformity than beauty, deformity would then lose the idea now annexed to it, and take that of beauty; as if the whole world should agree that *yes* and *no* should change their meanings, *yes* would then deny, and *no* would affirm.’ This is such a perfection of folly, that the reader will, perhaps, think it a forgery. He will find it, however, *verbatim et literatim*.

Speaking of Scotland, he says, ‘ The variety of sun and shade is here utterly unknown. There is no tree for either shelter or timber. The oak and the thorn *is* equally a stranger. They have neither wood for palisades, nor thorns for hedges*. A tree may be shown in Scotland as a horse in Venice.’ An *English* reader may, perhaps, require to be told, that there are thousands of trees of all ages and dimensions, within a mile of Edinburgh; that there are numerous and thriving plantations in Fife; and that, as some of them overshadow part of the post-road to St Andrews, the Rambler must have been blinder than darkness, if he did not see them. But why would any man travel at all, who is determined to believe nothing that he *hears*, and who, at the same time, cannot see six inches beyond his nose?

‘ We are not very sure that the bull is ever *without horns*, though we have been told that such bulls there are †.’ Who are the *we* he refers to? and who but the Doctor ever started so weak a question? His ignorance is below ridicule. It is true, that, in England, bulls which *want* horns are less numerous than husbands that *have* them; yet such bulls are always to be found. For the performance that contains this profound remark, this *agglomerated ramification of torpid imbecility*, be it known, that *we* have paid six shillings, which verifies the proverb, that *a fool and his money are soon parted*.

‘ We found a small church, clean to a degree unknown in any other part of Scotland †.’ Here, as Swift said to Steele, the

* Tour, p. 16. and 18. &c.

† Ibid p. 126.

‡ Tour, p. 21.

the fact *may* be true; but it is that of which Dr Johnson *must* be ignorant. It is certain, that some buildings of that kind in Edinburgh, are no high specimens of national taste; but, if the Rambler would insinuate that this want of elegance is general, we must impeach his veracity; we must remind him, that there are gloomy, dirty, and unwholesome cathedrals in both countries; and we must lament, that, when entering Scotland, the Doctor *left every thing behind him but HIMSELF*.

* Dryden's poem on the death of Mrs Killigrew is undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language ever has produced. The first part flows with a torrent of enthusiasm. All the stanzas, indeed, are not equal. He proceeds to compare it with an imperial crown, &c. But, a little after, the ode on St Cecilia's day is allowed to stand without a rival. These are his identical words; and his admirers may reconcile them if they can. Indeed, he seems ashamed of his own inconsistency, and is ready to relapse; but thinks, upon the whole, that Alexander's Feast may, perhaps, be pronounced superior to the ode on Killigrew. The Doctor is said to be the greatest critic of his age; yet the verses on Mrs Killigrew are below all criticism; and, perhaps, no person ever read them to the end, except their author, and Dr Johnson.

His Abylinian tale hath many beauties, yet the characters are insipid, the narrative ridiculous, and the reader disappointed. *Intercepting interruptions* and *volant animals* are above common comprehension. The Newtonian system had reached the happy valley; for the people there talk of the earth's attraction and the body's gravity †.

Dryden's fable of the Cock and Fox seems hardly worth the labour of *rejuvenescence* ‡. Some narcotic seems to have refrigerated the red liquor that circulates in the Doctor's veins, and to have *hebetated* and *obtunded* his powers of excogitation §, for elegance and wit never met more happily than here. Peruse only the first paragraph of this poem, and then

* Lives of English poets, vol. iii. p. 243. and 284. 22mo edit.

† W. Rastko, chap. vi.

‡ Vid. *Life of Dryden*.

§ Vid. *Dich article Blood*.

§ Excogitation, this combination of letters is to be found in the Doctor's works, though not in his Dictionary.

then judge. The nonsense that has been written by critics is, in quantity and absurdity, beyond all conception. Perhaps his admirers may say; that my remark is but the *ramification* of envy, the *intumescence* of ill-nature, the *exacerbation* of gloomy malignity. However, it would not be amiss to commit this page of *inanity* to the power of *eremation*; and let not his fondest idolators confide in its *indisferpibility*. In painting the sentiments and the scenes of common life, to write English that Englishmen cannot read, is a degree of insolence never known till now, and is, perhaps, nothing but the poor refuge of pedantic stupidity.

† Suspicion has been always considered, when it exceeds the common measure, as a token of depravity and corruption; and a Greek writer has laid it down as a standing maxim, that *he who believes not the oath of another, knows himself to be perjured*.—Suspicion is, indeed, a temper so uneasy and restless, that it is very justly appointed the concomitant of guilt. Suspicion is not less an enemy to virtue than to happiness. He that is already corrupt, is naturally suspicious, and he that becomes suspicious, will quickly be corrupt*. This cannot be true; but, if it were, the Rambler is by far the greatest miscreant that ever infested society. Speaking of Scotland, he says, 'I knew not whether I found man or woman whom I interrogated concerning payments of money, that could surmount the illiberal desire of *deceiving me*, by representing every thing as dearer than it is. The Scot must be a sturdy moralist who does not love Scotland better than truth †.' Apply the Doctor's maxims to his own conduct, and then judge of his honesty. He adds a little after: 'The civility and respect which we found at every place, it is *ungrateful* to omit, and tedious to repeat ‡.' He should not have spoke of ingratitude. The picture grows quite shocking.

* How they lived without kail, it is not easy to guess. They cultivate hardly any other plant for common tables; and, when they had not kail, they probably had nothing †. As the word *kail* is not to be found in his Dictionary, an English reader will be at a loss to find out what he means. His assertion is perfectly ridiculous; and here a *new* contradiction must

* Rambler, No. 79.

† Tour, p. 369.

‡ Ibid. p. 373.

‡ Tour, p. 55.

must be swallowed by the Doctor's believers; for, if OATS be 'a grain, which, in England, is generally given to horses,' but, in Scotland, *supports* the people *; in that case, it is easy to guess how they lived without *kail*. Oats are said to thrive best in cold and barren countries; and, to have mentioned this circumstance, had surely been better than to stuff his folios with such peevish nonsense.

In his life of Butler, the Doctor has confined his remarks to *Hudibras*, though the rest of that author's works merit equal attention. What are we to think of this invidious and culpable omission? *Hudibras* itself would, perhaps, have been omitted, if the book had not tended to ridicule dissenters; for no man in England seems to hate that sect so heartily. In Watt's life, he takes care to tell us, that the author was to be praised in every thing but his *non-conformity*; and, in his ever-memorable Tour, the Rambler says, 'I found several (Highland ministers), with whom I could not converse, without wishing, as my respect increased, that they had not been presbyterian-ans †.' Here a critic has very properly questioned the Doctor, what he would have said or thought, if the Highland ministers had lamented that *he* was *not* a presbyterian? This man has no tincture of the liberal and humane manners of the present age; and yet, with his peculiar consistency, he laughs at the dissenter who refused to eat a Christmas pye ‡. This believer in the Cocklane ghost says, 'though I have, like the rest of mankind, many failings and weaknesses, I have not yet, by either friends or enemies, been charged with *superstition*;' yet, with all the Doctor's 'contempt of old women and their tales §,' he would, if a Roman consul, have disbanded his army for the scratching of a rat ¶.

'We found tea here, as in every other place, but our spoons were of horn **.' This important fact had been hinted in a former page; and such is the Doctor's politeness.

Some rugged rock's hard entrails gave thee form,

And raging seas produc'd thee in a storm.

POPE.

'They do what I found it not very easy to endure. They pollute the tea-table by plates piled with large slices of Cheshire shire

* Vid. folio Dictionary.

† Rambler, No. 59.

‡ Tour, p. 242.

§ Vid. Plutarch.

¶ Butler's life.

** Tour, p. 283.

• *hire these* *. The happiness of this remark will be fully felt by people acquainted with the peculiar purity of Pomposo's person.

• McLeod left them *lying* dead by families as they stood †. This is *profound*; for no man can stand and lie at the same time; nor is it clear how he can lie as he stands, unless he may be said to *lie* upon his feet.

Of the Memoirs of Scriblerus, the Doctor says: 'If the whole may be estimated by this specimen, which seems to be the production of Arbuthnot, with a few touches, perhaps, by Pope, the want of more will not be much lamented; for the follies which the writer ridicules, are so little practised, that they are not known; nor can the satire be understood but by the learned: He raises phantoms of absurdity, and then drives them away: He cures diseases that were never felt.'

• For this reason ‡, the joint production of three great writers has never obtained *any* notice from mankind. It has been little read, or when read, has been forgotten, as no man could be wiser, better, or merrier by remembering it.

• The design cannot boast of much originality; for, besides its general resemblance to *Don Quixote*, there will be found in it particular imitations of the history of Mr Ouffie.

• Swift carried so much of it into Ireland as supplied him with hints for his travels; and with those the world might have been contented, though the rest had been suppressed §.

Here we have a copious display of the Doctor's *taste*; and all the volumes of English criticism cannot produce a poorer page.

The work thus condemned, contains a very rich vein of wit and learning. The follies which it exposes, though a little heightened, were, in that age, frequent, and perfectly well known. The writers whom it ridicules, have sunk into *notoriety*. The book is always reprinted with the prose works of Pope, and Swift, and Arbuthnot; and what stronger mark of notice can the public bestow? Every man who reads it, must be the wiser and the merrier; and the satire may be understood with very little learning.

B

De

* Tour, p. 124; † Ibid. p. 154; ‡ The Doctor ought to have said, 'For these reasons,' as he mentions several §. Pope's life.

Dr Arbuthnot was a Scotfman, and, perhaps, a Prefbyterian. He was an amiable man. He is dead. Dr Johnson feels himself to be his inferior; and, therefore, endeavours to murder the reputation of his works. To gain credit with the reader, he artfully draws a very high character of Arbuthnot, a few pages before, and here, in effect, overturns it. He had said that Arbuthnot was 'a scholar, with great brilliancy of wit.' But, if his wit and learning are not displayed in the Memoirs of Scriblerus, we may ask where wit and learning are to be found?

Of this extract, the style is as slovenly as the leading sentiments are false.

The book is said to be, the 'production of Arbuthnot.' Within ten lines, it is 'the joint production of ~~these~~ great writers.' How can follies be practised that are not known? or diseases cured, that were never felt? He claims the attributes of omniscience when saying, that 'it has been little read, or, when read, has been forgotten;' for, as it has been so frequently reprinted, no human being can be certain that it has been little read, or forgotten; but there is the strongest evidence of the contrary. This period concludes, as it began, with a most absurd assertion. If 'the design cannot boast of much originality,' there is nothing original in the literary world. Who is Mr Ousle? and who told the Doctor that Swift carried any part of Scriblerus into Ireland, to supply hints for his travels? When Gulliver was published, Dr Arbuthnot, as appears from their correspondence, did not know whether that book was written by Swift or not; so that the Dean must have carried *nothing* of Arbuthnot's along with him. Had Dr Johnson 'flourished and stunk' in their age, he would have been the hero of these memoirs; and, to suppose him conscious of this circumstance, will account for the Rambler's malevolence, and explain why the bull broke into a china-shop.

I beg particular attention to the following passage.

'His (Pope's) version may be said to have tuned the English tongue; for, since its appearance, no writer*, however deficient in other powers, has wanted *melody*.' This is wild enough; but, of Gray's two longest Odes, 'the language is laboured

* He should have said, *no poet*; for that was his meaning, if he had any. No writer, includes prose as well as verse; and this sample may give us a fair idea of the Doctor's accuracy in point of style.

‘laboured into *barbness*.’ Hammond’s verses ‘never glide in in a stream of *melody*.’ The diction of Collins ‘was often *barb*’, unskillfully laboured, and injudiciously selected. His lines, commonly, are of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants. Of the style of Savage, ‘The general fault is, *barbness*. The diction of Shenstone ‘is often *barb*, improper, and affected,’ &c.

Of these five poets, some were not born when Pope’s version was published; and, of the rest, not one had penned a line now extant. They are all here charged, in the strongest terms, with *barbness*; and yet, (*mirabile dictu*!) since the appearance of Pope’s *Iliad*, ‘no writer, however deficient in other powers, has ‘wanted *melody*.’

It is no less curious, that the author of this wonder-working translation is himself charged with want of melody; and that too in a poem written many years after the appearance of Pope’s *Homér*. The essay on man contains more lines unsuccessfully laboured, more *barbness* of diction, more thoughts imperfectly expressed, more levity without elegance, and more heaviness without strength*, &c. *Cynthia vellis aurem*.

‘I do not see that the *Bard* promotes any truth, moral or political.† And let us ask this Idler, what truth, moral or political, is promoted by telling us, that, when Thomson came to London, his first want was a pair of shoes; that Pope ‘wore a kind of fur doublet, under a shirt of very coarse washed linen, with fine sleeves; and a heap of other tiresome and disgusting trifles which make his narrative seem ridiculous. Had Johnson been Pope’s apothecary, we would certainly have heard of the frequency of his pulse, the colour of his water, and the quantity of his stools.

‘Though Pope seemed angry when a dram was offered him, he did not forbear to drink it. And who the Devil cares whether he did or not? The Doctor needed hardly to have told us, that ‘his petty peculiarities were communicated by a female domestic; for no gentleman would have confessed that they came within the reach of his observation.

The truly illustrious author of the *RAMBLER*, has exerted his venomous eloquence, through several pages, in order to convince us, that ‘never were penury of knowledge and vulgarity of sentiment so happily disguised,’ as in Pope’s *Essay on Man*.

For

* Life of Pope.

† Gray’s life,

For this purpose, the Doctor celebrates the character of one Croufaz, whose intentions 'were *always* right, his opinions 'were solid, and his religion pure'. In opposition to *this* authority, let us hear the great citizen of Geneva.

'M. de Croufaz has lately given us a refutation of the ethic epistles of Mr Pope, which I have read; but it did not please me. I will not take upon me to say, which of these two authors is in the right; but I am persuaded, that the book of the former will never excite the reader to do any one virtuous action, whereas *our zeal for every thing great and good is awakened by that of Pope* †.'

'He (Pope) nursed in his mind a foolish distaste of Kings.' And again, 'He gratified that ambitious petulance with which he affected to insult the great †.'

Johnson himself is by no means remarkable for his respect to the great. In the preface to his folio Dictionary, he tells us, that it was written 'without any patronage of the great,' which is a mistake; for he had published a pamphlet, some years before, wherein he acknowledges, that Chesterfield had patronized him; and why the Doctor eat in his own words, it is hard to say; for Chesterfield continued his friend to the last; and such a man was very likely *the strongest spoke in the Doctor's wheel*. But his Lordship is now dead, and the Rambler is always and eminently *grateful*.

A great Personage having once (it is said) asked the Doctor, why there were so many words in his Dictionary which he could not understand? his pensioner replied, (and nobody but a thorough courtier could have made such a reply) 'My book *was not written for Kings*.' Perhaps this anecdote, though quite in character, may not be true; but, in Scotland, the grossness of Johnson's conversation shocked all who came near him. One elegant work he abused in its author's hearing; and no man of common decency (far less Mr Pope) would have said what he did of the present Royal family. Of this it were easy to bring immediate and complete evidence.

'Wives and husbands are, indeed, incessantly complaining of each other §.' Not unless both are fools, nor always then.

The

• Pope's life.

† Elou's, Letter 33.

‡ Pope's life.

§ Rambler, No. 45.

The reader is, perhaps, impatient to taste the Doctor's lexicographical beauties; and, though much more may be said to him as a patriot, a moralist, and a critic, yet I shall, in the mean time, offer a small specimen of his *great* work, and endeavour, as Swift said, to knead up a layer of *utile* with a layer of *dulce*. Let us then (*arctis auribus*) listen to the words of understanding; and, if, like some American savages, we cannot count our fingers, Dr. Johnson himself will teach us how to do it; for he tells us, on *Shakespeare's* authority, that two is, 'one and one.' Pope and Creech are quoted to prove, that three is, 'two and one.' Four is, 'two and two,' and, if you have the least doubt that 'four and one' make five, or that five is, 'the half of ten,' you will be silenced by the name of Dryden. Six is, 'twice three, one more than five.' Seven is, 'four and three, one more than six.' Eight is, 'twice four, a word of number.' Nine is, 'one more than eight.' Niath is, 'that which precedes the tenth.' Ten is, 'the decimal number, twice five.' Tenth is, 'first after the ninth, the ordinal of ten.' Eleven is, 'ten and one.' Eleventh is, 'the next in order to the tenth,' and is derived from eleven. Twelve is, 'two and ten;' and twelfth, 'second after the tenth, the ordinal of twelve.' Thirteen is, 'ten and three.' Fourteen is, 'four and ten.' Fifteen is, 'five and ten.' Fifteenth, 'the ordinal of fifteen, the fifth after the tenth;' and, if you entertain any suspicion as to the verity of these definitions, read over Boyle, Brown, Dryden, Moses, Raleigh, Sandys, Shakespeare, and Bacon. Thirdly is, in the 'third place.' Thrice, 'three times, threefold, thrice repeated, consisting of three.' Threepence, (*three and pence*) 'a small silver coin, valued at thrice a penny.' Threescore, a. (*three and score*) 'thrice twenty, sixty.' Pope, Raleigh, Wisceman, Shakespeare, Brown, Dryden, and Spencer, are cited to convince you, that these explanations are accurate. And the other articles of numeration, with all their derivations, definitions, and the passages that are quoted as authorities to support them, would, perhaps, fill a large pamphlet. And this is one recipe for making books.

A farthing is, 'the fourth part of a penny, and a penny is, 'a small coin, of which twelve make a shilling.' A shilling is 'now twelve pence.' A Pound is, 'the sum of twenty shillings;' and, if thou hast forgot the worth of a Guinea, know that it is 'a gold coin, valued at one and twenty shillings;' for

Dryden,

Dryden, Locke, and Cocker, have said all this. A Punk is, 'a whore, a common prostitute;' and a Poppy is, 'a whelp, the progeny of a bitch, a name of contemptuous reproach to a man.' To *Mew* is, 'to cry as a cat.' To *Kaw* is, 'to cry as a Raven, Crow, or Rook; and the cry of a Raven or Crow (and he might have added, of a Jack daw too) is kaw.'

There are men (says Dr Johnson) who claim the name of authors, merely to disgrace it, and fill the world with volumes, only to bury letters in their own rubbish. The traveller who tells, in a pompous *Pofo*, that he saw the *Pantheon* at *Rome*, and the *Medicean Venus* at *Florence*; the natural historian, who, describing the productions of a narrow island, recounts all that it has in common with every other part of the world; the collector of antiquities, that accounts every thing a curiosity, which the ruins of *Herculanum* happen to emit, though an instrument already known in a thousand repositories, or a cup common to the antients, the moderns, and all mankind, may be justly censured as the persecutors of students, and the thieves of that time, which never can be restored.*

The traveller who visits *Rome* and *Florence*, and gives an account of what he saw to the world, without describing the *Pantheon* and the *Medicean Venus*, will, very properly, be censured as an ignorant and tasteless wanderer. The historian who describes an island, whether wide or narrow, ought to begin by telling if it produces water, grass, wood, and corn. A sword, a dagger, and a bow, are common to the antients, the moderns, and almost all mankind; yet, if any Roman military weapon were discovered in the ruins of *Herculanum*, it would be the just object of rational curiosity, and a collector of antiquities might describe it without being censured, in Johnson's polite style, as *a thief of time*. Of this passage, however, the leading idea is just; and, had the Doctor been able to express himself with precision, it would have served, in an admirable manner, to delineate the character of the author of those passages we have just now been reading from his Dictionary.

A Puppy is said to be, 'the progeny of a bitch,' but so is the bitch herself. We have halfpence, but no small coin valued at a penny, nor any small silver coin, now current, valued at three a penny. Repleviable is, 'what may be replevined.'

Repair

Repair is, 'reparation'; and Reparation is, 'the act of repairing.' A Republican is, 'one who thinks a commonwealth, without monarchy, the best government.' But this is only half a definition; for every subject of a republic, is a republican, whether he thinks it the best government or not. Republican, as (from republic) is, 'placing the government in the people.' Is Venice, under the government of the people? Republican, it is, 'commonwealth, state in which the power is lodged in more than one.' At this rate, almost every government in the world is a republic. Even in France, the King cannot do every thing. The Grand Turk is a limited Monarch. Nobody calls Britain a republic. It is curious enough to see such an author as Ben Johnson cited to prove what is a republic. The reader will compute what title the Doctor has to the character given him by a writer, viz. that 'his great learning and genius render him one of the most *shining* ornaments of the present age.' A Looking-glass is, 'a glass which shews forms reflected;' but so will a common glass bottle; though we never term it a looking-glass. He says it is compounded of *look* and *glass*; but, if the reader happens to think it is derived from *looking* and *glass*, the Doctor cannot confute him. A Knave is, 'a petty rascal, a scoundrel.' a *Loon* is, 'a sorry fellow, a scoundrel.' A *Looby* is, 'a lubber, a clumsy clown.' A *Lubber* is, 'a sturdy drone, an idle, fat, bulky fellow, a booby.' A *Lofel* is, 'a scoundrel, a sorry worthless fellow.' A *Lubbar* is, 'a lazy sturdy fellow.' A *Booby* is— but you must know what it is, while you read, in these elegant definitions, the taste and genius of Dr Johnson. He says, that Bone is, 'the solid parts of the body of an animal.' Are the fat and the muscles not solid? A Volume is, 'something rolled or convolved;' and so are a barrel, a foot-ball, and a blanket. But a volume is likewise 'as much as *stem* convolved at once,' an expression hardly intelligible; and it is a book. A Book, we are told, is, 'a volume, in which we read or write;' and whether we read and write in it or not.

V. has two powers expressed in English by two characters, 'v, consonant, and u, vowel.' One would think these were two different letters, as much as any others in the alphabet. It is remarkable that this *English* Dictionary begins with a *Latin* word; and the Doctor has inserted it without giving an authority.

A Ketch is, 'a *heavy* ship;' and a Junk is, 'a *small* ship of China.' A Sloop is, 'a *small* ship;' and a Brigantine is, 'a *light* vessel;' but, it would have required little learning or ingenuity to have said, that, in our marine, a sloop has only one mast, except sloops of war, which have three; and, that a brigantine is a merchant ship with two. A brig, a lugger, a schooner, a galliot, a galleon, a prosa, a punt, a xebecque, and a snow, are not inserted in this complete English Dictionary; but a Cutter is, 'a nimble boat that *cuts* the water.' Did we ever hear of a boat that did not cut the water? This explanation, like that of at least twenty thousand others, is defective; because, besides a man of war's boat, the word Cutter is applied to a small vessel with one mast, rigged as a sloop; that sails very near the *wind*; from which peculiarity, its appellation is derived.

A Cannon is, 'a gun larger than can be managed by the hand.' Cannon-ball and Cannon-shot are, 'the balls which are shot from great guns.' Mr Locke is cited to shew, that *cannot* is compounded of *can* and *not*. Menstruous is, 'having the catamenia;' and this last word is wanting, a frequent mode of definition in this book. The Eye is, 'the organ of vision.' Eye-drop, (*eye* and *drop*) 'tear.' See also Eye-ball, Eye-brow, Eye-glance, Eye-glass, Eyeless, Eye-lid, Eye-sight, Eye-sore, Eye-tooth, Eye-wink, Eye-witness: Eye-string is, 'the string of the eye*.' The following names are cited to support the explanations: Dryden, Spencer, Newton, Milton, Garth, Bacon, Samuel, Peter, and Shakespeare four times. The man who can make such a pedantic parade of erudition, must be a mere quack in the business of book-building; and the reader, who thinks himself edified by hearing that an eye-wink is, 'a wink as a hint or token,' must be an object of pity. But there is no such reader. *Quere*, Do we never wink but as a hint or token? Achor is, 'a species of the *Herpes*;' and Hey, 'an expression of joy.' A Mocker is, 'one who mocks;' and a Laughing-stock, (*laugh* and *stock*) a 'butt,' an object of ridicule. Iron, a: is, 'made of iron;' and Iron, *f*: is said to be, 'a metal common to all parts of the world,' which is not the fact.

This
What string does the Doctor mean? for, besides the optic nerve, there are six muscles, four straight, and two oblique, and other small nervous branches.

Gray thought his language more poetical, as it was more remote from common use *. This assertion is not entirely without foundation, but it is very far from being quite true.

Finding in Dryden, honey *redolent of spring*, an expression that reaches the utmost limits of our language, Gray drove it a little more beyond common apprehension, by making *gale* to be *redolent of joy and youth* †. The censure is just. But Dr Johnson is the last man alive, who should blame one for driving our language to its utmost limits: For a very great part of his life has been spent in corrupting and confounding our tongue. In some verses to a Lady, he talks of his *arthritic pains* ‡, an epithet surely not much more suitable to the dialect of Parnassus than any thing to be found in Gray. Johnson himself cannot always write grammar. 'In a short time many were content to be shewn beauties which *they could not see* §.' The author must here mean—'Beauties which they could not have seen;'—for it is needless to add, that no man can be shewn what he cannot see.

It is curious to observe a man draw his own picture, without intending it. Pomposo, when censuring some of his odes, observes, That 'Gray is too fond of words arbitrarily compounded. The mind of the writer seems to work with unnatural violence. *Double, double, toil and trouble.*' He (the author of an Elegy in a country church-yard) 'has a kind of strutting dignity, and is tall by walking on tip-toe. His art and his struggle are too visible, and there is too little appearance of ease, or nature. In all Gray's odes, there is a kind of cumbrous splendour which we wish away ||.' We may say like Nathan, *Thou art the man.*

Mr Gray and Mr Horace Walpole, are said to have *wandered* through France and Italy ¶. And as a contrast to this polite expression, I shall add some remarks that have occurred on the Doctor's own mode of wandering.

'It must afford peculiar entertainment to see a person of his character, who has scarcely ever been without the precincts of this metropolis (London), and *who has been long accustomed*

C

* Gray's life.

† Ibid. in *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. XVII.

§ Gray's life.

|| Ibid. in *Ibid.*

‘ customed to the adulation of a little knot of companions of his own-trade sallying forth in quest of discoveries—Neither the people nor the country that he has visited will perhaps be considered as the most extraordinary part of the phænomena he has described.—The Doctor has endeavoured to give an account of his travels ; but he has furnished his readers with a picture of himself. He has seen very little, and observed still less. His narration is neither supported with vivacity, to make it entertaining; nor accompanied with information; to render it instructive. It exhibits the pompous artificial diction of the Rambler with the same *vacuity of thought*.—The reader is led from one Highland family to another merely to be informed of the number of their children, the barrenness of their country, and of the kindness with which the Doctor was treated. In the Highlands he is like a foolish peasant brought for the first time into a great city, staring at every sign-post, and gaping with equal wonder and astonishment at every object he meets with *.’

‘ At Florence they (Gray and Walpole) quarrelled and parted; and Mr Walpole is now content to have it told that it was by his fault †.’ This is a dirty insinuation; and the declamation that follows in the next period is not much better.

He observes, That “ *A long story perhaps adds little to Gray’s reputation ‡.* ” *Perhaps* was useless here, and indeed the Doctor has introduced it in a hundred places, where it was useless, and left it out in as many where it was wanted. In justice to Gray, his biographer should have added, that the Bard rejected, from a correct edition of his works, this insipid series of verses.

‘ Gray’s reputation was now so high that he had the honour of refusing the laurel §.’ A man’s reputation has never yet acquired him the laurel, without some particular application from a courtier. I see not what honour is acquired by refusing the laurel. An hundred pounds a-year would have enabled an economist like Mr Gray to preserve his freedom and extend his benevolence. The office of laureat is only ridiculous in the hand

* Edinburgh Review, Vol. III. P. 55. et seq.

† Gray’s life.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

hands of a fool. Mr Savage in that character produced nothing that would dishonour an Englishman and a poet. Perhaps Gray, a very costly writer, could not readily have made a decent number of verses within the limited time. From the passage now quoted the reader will not fail to remark, that the Rambler "nurses in his mind a foolish disesteem of kings *."

Mr Gray 'had a notion not very peculiar, that he could not write but at certain times, or at happy moments; a fantastic foppery to which *my* kindness for a man of learning and of virtue wishes him to have been superior †.' Milton, who was no doubt a shallow fellow compared with the Reformer of our language, had the same 'fantastic foppery.' Mr Hume remarks that Milton had not leisure to watch 'the returns of genius.'—Every man feels himself at some times less capable of intellectual effort, than at others. The Rambler himself has in the most express terms contradicted his present notion. In Denham's life he mentions four lines that must have been written 'at some *happy moment propitious to poetry*.' In some other place in the same lives his tumid and prolix eloquence dis-embogues itself to prove, what no man ever doubted, viz. 'That a tradesman's hand is often out, he cannot tell why.' And an inference is drawn, That this is still more apt to be the case with a man straining his mental abilities.

In Gray's ode on spring, 'The thoughts have nothing new, the morality is natural, but too stale ‡.' Read the poem, and then esteem the critic if you can. Speaking of *the Bard* he says, 'Of the first stanza the abrupt beginning has been celebrated; but *technical* beauties can give praise only to the inventor §.' The question here is, What he means by a *technical* beauty? That word he explains, 'Belonging to arts; not in common or popular use'—How can this word in either of these senses apply here with propriety?

What he says of "these four stanzas"—conveys, I think, no sentiment. Every word may be understood separately, but in their present arrangement they seem to have no signification, or they signify nonsense, and perhaps, contradiction; but this passage

* Life of Pope.

† Gray's life.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

passage I leave to the supreme tribunal of all authors—to the reason and common sense of the reader. He can best determine whether he has ‘never seen the notions in any other place,’ ‘yet persuades himself that he always felt them.’ These ideas are very beautifully expressed in many passages of Gaelic poetry : and let it be remembered, to the honour of his taste and candour, that Mr Gray in one of his letters confesses, how his admiration of Mr Macpherson’s work had put him (to use his own words) *half mad*.

Comparing Gray’s with an ode of Horace, * he says, ‘there is in the *Bard* more force, more thought, and more variety’—as indeed there very well may, for in the one there are thirty-six lines only, and in the other one hundred and forty-four. His whole works are full of such vapid observations. ‘But to copy is less than to invent, theft is always dangerous.’ And *who knoweth not such things as these*—if he means to insinuate that Gray’s *Bard* is a copy of Horace, (and this is the plain inference from his words) he may be charged in direct terms as an *atrocious violator of TRUTH*.

‘The fiction of Horace was to the Romans credible; (no) but its revival disgusts *us* with apparent and unconquerable falsehood, *Incredulus odi* †.’ Who are the *us* referred to in this period? And how will the Doctor’s verdict be digested at Aberdeen by ‘a poet, a philosopher, and a good man ‡.’ It is diverting to remark how these *mutual admirers* clash on the clearest point, with not a possibility of reconciliation.

I pass by five or six lines, which are not worth contradiction, though they cannot resist it. ‘I do not see that the *Bard* promotes any truth moral or political §.’ The Rambler’s intellect is *blind*.—He seems to have stared a great deal, to have seen little or nothing. The *Bard* very forcibly impresses this moral, political, and important truth, that eternal vengeance would pursue the English Tyrant and his posterity, as enemies to poetry, and exterminators of mankind. Johnson, a stickler for the *jus divinum*, did not relish this idea.

He commends the ‘Ode on Adversity,’ but the hint was at first taken from Horace ||. The poem referred to has almost

* *Pastor cum traheret per freta navibus, &c.*

† Gray’s Life.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

|| Ibid.

no resemblance to Gray's. And if we go on at this rate, where will we find any thing original? He mistakes the title of this poem, which is not an 'Ode on,' but a 'Hymn to' Adversity. This is a clear though trifling proof of his inattention. As he dares not condemn this piece, it is dismissed in six lines, to make room for 'The wonderful wonder of wonders, the two Sister Odes, by which many have been persuaded to think themselves delighted *.' He chews them through four tedious octavo pages. We come then to Gray's Elegy, which occupies an equal share of a paragraph that contains only fourteen lines. So much more plentiful is the critic in gall than honey! And in reading this fragment we may remark that *nonsense* is not *panegyric*.

Speaking of Welsh Mythology, he says, 'Attention recoils from the repetition of a tale that, even when it was *first* heard, was heard with scorn †.' There is no reason to think that the Welsh disbelieved these fictions. It is much more likely that many believe them at this day. Shakespeare has from this superstition made a whimsical picture of Owen Glendower; and HE no doubt painted nature. This is one of those assertions which our dictator should have qualified with a *perhaps*, an adverb, which, wherever it *ought* to be met with in the Doctor's pages, 'will not easily be found ‡.'

'But I will no longer look for particular faults; yet let it be observed that the ode might have been concluded with an action of better example; but suicide is always to be had without expence of thought.'

The lines objected to are these;

'He spoke, and headlong from the mountains height,

'Deep in the roaring tide, he plung'd to endless night.'

I wish the Doctor had pointed out a better conclusion.

NUMSKULL, *f.* (*numb*, and *skull*) 'a Dullard; a Dunce; a Dolt; a Blockhead.' Numskulled, *a* (from *Numskull*) 'dull; stupid; doltish.'—NUN, *f.* 'a woman dedicated to the severer duties of religion, secluded in a cloister from the world.'

The

* Gray's Life. † Ibid.

‡ A favourite phrase of the Rambler's.

§ Gray's Life.

The Nuns of Loudon were *not* employed in the severer duties of religion, which has nothing to do with severity. The institution of nunneries is the most atrocious insult upon human feelings, that ever disgraced the selfish and brutal policy of the Roman priesthood, and its effects are the most shocking and criminal. The man who would palliate such an outrage on Christianity, deserves no quarter. From this sample of his good sense, one would hardly rank the Rambler above 'a domestic animal, that catches mice.'

A KETTLE is 'a vessel in which liquor is boiled.' Lord Oxford's female domestic could have furnished the Doctor with a better description.—JACK is, 1. the diminutive of John—2. The name of '*instruments*, which supply the place of a boy as an *instrument* to pull off boots.'—BRONCHOCELE *f.* a 'tumor of that part of the *aspera tertia*, called the *Bronches*'—and this last word is wanting. BROOM is 'a shrub'—and BROGUE 'a kind of shoe.' See also Broomstaff, Broomy, Broth, Brothel, and Brothel-house. BUBO, 'the groin from the bending of the thigh to the *scrotum*;' but the *scrotum* is not explained.

'It has been maintained by some, who love to talk of what they do not know, that pastoral is the most ancient poetry.' But in the next period, 'pastoral poetry was the first employment of the human imagination *.' The Doctor, therefore, by his own account, is one of those, who love to talk of (and what is yet worse to assert) what they do not know. In North America, the natives have no conceptions of pastoral life among themselves, and their poetry, such as it is, has no relation to that state of society.

Pastoral poetry "is generally pleasing, because it entertains the mind with representations of scenes familiar to almost every imagination, and of which all can equally judge whether they are well described, or not †."

This period is so closely interwoven with nonsense, that it will take some pains to disentangle it. Rural scenes are not familiar to almost every imagination. In England perhaps half the people are shut up in large towns, and such is the gross ignorance

* Rambler, No. 36.

† Ibid.

ignorance of some of them, that an old woman in London once asked, *whether potatoes grew on trees*. Neither is every man an equal judge even of what is familiar to him. Observe how the Rambler confounds the distinction between *all*, and *almost every*. The whole number is in the same stile.

‘ On the original contrivers of mischief let an insulted nation pour out its vengeance. With whatever design they have inflamed this pernicious contest, they are themselves equally detestable. If they with success to the colonies, they are **TRAITORS** to this country; if they with their defeat, they are **TRAITORS** at once to America and England. To them (Mess. Burke & Co.) and them only, must be imputed the interruption of commerce, and the miseries of war, the sorrow of those who shall be ruined, and the blood of those that shall fall *.’

No man that opposes Lord North *can* think any terms too severe for such a writer.

‘ At this time a long course of opposition to Sir Robert Walpole had filled the nation with clamours for liberty, of which no man felt the want, and with care for liberty which was not in danger †.’

No man was more violent than Johnson in abusing Walpole. We have already seen some of those political definitions, which are at this hour extant in the Doctor’s Dictionary. His present zeal for government can arise from self-interest only. And to take his own words, he comes under suspicion *as a wretch hired to vindicate the late measures of the Court* ‡. He accuses Milton as a tool of authority, as a forger hired to assassinate the memory of Charles I. These charges came with a very bad grace from the Rambler. They are long since refuted, and yet they will be reprinted in every future edition of his book.

Will any man be the wiser, the better, or the merrier, by reading what follows—‘ Lyttleton was his (Shenstone’s) neighbour, and his rival, whose empire, spacious and opulent, looked

* Taxation no tyranny.

† Thomson’s life.

‡ The author has no intention here to disseminate political opinions—His meaning is only to prove, that *somebody* is void of principle, of consistency, and of shame.

‘looked with disdain on the *petty-state* that appeared behind it. For a while the inhabitants of Hagley affected to tell their acquaintance of the *little fellow* that was trying to make himself admired; but when by degrees the *Leasowes* forced themselves into notice, they took care to defeat the curiosity which they could not suppress, by conducting their visitants per-
versely to inconvenient points of view, and introducing them at the wrong end of a walk to detect a deception; injuries of which Shenstone would heavily complain *.’ The paragraph closes with a *deep* observation.

As the Doctor’s own journeymen † have lamented the existence of this beautiful and important passage, I have only to say, that *Poor* Lyttleton (as the Doctor calls him) patronized Fielding, and that the Rambler patronizeth William Shaw: That his Lordship was an elegant writer: That he did not adopt Johnson’s new words: That he was a great and an amiable man: That *Lexiphanes* was dedicated to him: And that he is *dead*.

‘*The Prospect of Eaton College* suggests nothing to Gray, which every beholder does not equally think and feel ‡.’ He might as well say, that every man in England was capable of writing Gray’s *Elegy*.

‘Snot. The mucus of the nose.’—‘Nose. The prominence on the face, which is the organ of *scent*, and the *emunctory* of the brain.’

He should have said the organ of *smell*, for we do not say the sense of *scenting*. But from what he says of them, it appears that he is ignorant of the distinction between these two words.—If the nose were the emunctory of the brain (which every surgeon’s apprentice knows that it is *not*), in that case snot could not be the mucus of the nose, but the mucus of the brain. It belongs to neither. It is entirely, or principally formed in the glands of the throat, as we see every day in coughing. To contradict such inconsistencies would be below the dignity of any writer, if they were found in a book less famous than the English Dictionary.

Rust.

* Life of Shenstone. † Gentleman’s Magazine. ‡ Gray’s life

Rust. ' The red *Desquamation* of old iron.'

Desquamation. ' The act of scaling foul bones.'

Sinew. ' 1. A tendon; the ligament by which the joints are moved.—3. *Muscle* or *nerve*!'—Other metals rust as well as iron, and rust is not always red; that of copper for instance is blue or green. It is not quite clear why the word *Desquamation* is introduced. But his account of a *sinew* exceeds every thing of the kind.

Highflier. ' One that carries his opinion to extravagance.' The word relates to a peculiar set of men in this country, and to them only. A Dervise, a Friar, and a Bramin, profess extravagant opinions; but an English writer would not call them *Highfliers*, nor would he be understood if he did. Here I cannot help quoting the remarks already made by a judicious friend on this subject.

' Among the many foibles of the human race, we may justly reckon this to be one, that when they have once got any thing really useful, they apply it in all cases, proper or improper, till at last they make it quite ridiculous. Nothing can possibly be more useful than a just and accurate *definition*; because by this only we are able to distinguish one thing from another. It is obvious, however, that in definitions we ought always to define a thing less known by one which is more so, and those things which are known to every body, neither can be defined, nor ought we to attempt a definition of them at all; because we must either explain them by themselves, or by something less known than themselves; both of which give our definitions the most ridiculous air imaginable.

' A certain right reverend gentleman, not many miles from Edinburgh, and whom, out of my great regard for the cloth; I put in the first place, gave the following definition of a thief. " A thief, says he, my friends, is a man of a *thievish disposition*." Now though this definition is somewhat imperfect, for a thief also excites that *thievish disposition* which lurks in his breast, I intend to take it for my model, on account of its great conformity to many of the definitions given by the most celebrated authors.—I remember to have seen

‘ in a monthly review a definition of *Nature*, which began in
 ‘ the following manner. “ *Nature* is that *innate* celestial
 ‘ fire.”—The rest hath in truth escaped my memory, though
 ‘ I remember the Reviewers indecently compared it to the
 ‘ following lines, which they say were a description of a dog-
 ‘ fish.

‘ And his evacuations

‘ Were made a *parte post*.

‘ *A parte post*! these words so hard

‘ In Latin though I speak ‘em,

‘ Their meaning in plain English is,

‘ He made pure *Album Græcum*.

‘ This definition rather goes a step beyond that of the cler-
 ‘ gyman, as it explains the words a *parte post* by *Album Græ-*
 ‘ *cum*, which are more obscure than the former, and neither
 ‘ of which, out of my great regard to decency, I choose to
 ‘ translate.—Whether Dr Johnson composed his dictionary,
 ‘ after hearing the abovementioned clergyman’s sermon, or not,
 ‘ I cannot tell, but he seems very much to have taken him for
 ‘ his model, even though the said clergyman was a Presbyte-
 ‘ rian, and Dr Johnson has an aversion at Presbyterians. Thus,
 ‘ when he tells us, that *short* is *not long*, and that *long* is *not*
 ‘ *short*, he certainly might as well have told us that a thief is a
 ‘ man of a thievish disposition. I am surprized indeed how
 ‘ the intellects of a human creature could be obscured by pe-
 ‘ dantry, and the love of words, to such a degree as to insert
 ‘ this distinction in a book pretended to be written for the
 ‘ instruction and benefit of society. Much more am I surpris-
 ‘ ed how the authors of all dictionaries of the English lan-
 ‘ guage have followed the same ridiculous plan, as if they had
 ‘ positively intended to make their books as little valuable as
 ‘ possible. Nay, I am almost tempted to think, that the read-
 ‘ ers have a natural inclination to peruse nonsense, and can-
 ‘ not be satisfied without a considerable quantity of that in-
 ‘ gredient in every book which falls into their hands. *Long*
 ‘ and *short* are terms merely relative, and which every body
 ‘ knows; to explain them therefore by one another, is to ex-
 ‘ plain

plain them by themselves. But besides this ridiculous way of explaining a thing by itself, pedants, of whom we may justly reckon Dr Johnson the Prince, have fallen upon a most ingenious method of explaining the English by the *Latin*, or some other language still further beyond the reach of vulgar ken. Thus, when Dr Johnson defines *fire*, he tells us it is the *igneous element*. To *water* (the verb) he tells us, is to *irrigate*, by which no doubt we are greatly edified. To *do* is to *practise*, and to practise is to do, &c.

But the most curious kind of definitions are these enigmatical ones of our author, by which he industriously prevents the reader from knowing the meaning of the words he explains. Thus, the *hair* he tells us is one of the common *teguments* of the body; but this will not distinguish it from the skin, and shews the extreme poverty of judgment under which the Doctor laboured, when he could not point out the distinguishing mark between the hair and skin. A dog is "a domestic animal remarkably various in his species," but this does not distinguish him, except to natural historians from a cow, a sheep, or a hog; for of these there are also different *breeds* or species. A cat is "a domestic animal that catches mice;" but this may be said of an owl, or a dog; for a dog will catch mice if he sees them, though he does not watch for them as a cat does. Nay, if we happen to overlook the word *animal*, or not to understand it, we may mistake the cat for a mouse-trap. The earth, according to our learned author, is "the element distinct from fire, air or water;" but this may be light or electricity as well as earth.—Air is "the element encompassing the terraqueous globe;" but an unlearned reader would be very apt to mistake this for the *ocean*, &c.

When the Doctor comes to his *learned* definitions, he outdoes, if possible, his enigmatical ones. Network is "any thing *reticulated* or *decussated* at equal distances." A nose is "the prominence on the face which is the organ of scent, and the emunctory of the brain."—The heart is "the muscle which by its contraction and dilatation propells the blood through the course of circulation, and is therefore considered

'ed as the source of vital motion.'—Now let any person consider for whom such strange definitions can possibly be intended. To give instruction to the ignorant they certainly are not designed; neither can they give satisfaction to the learned, because they are not accurate. The nose, for instance, he says is the emunctory of the brain: but every anatomist knows that it performs no such office; neither hath the nose any communication with the brain, but by means of its nerves.—Yet this dictionary is reckoned the best English one extant. What then must the rest be; or what shall we think of those who mistake a book stuffed with such stupid assemblages of words, for a *learned* composition?—Definitions undoubtedly are necessary, but not such as give us no information, or lead us astray. Neither can any thing shew the sagacity or strength of judgment which a man possesses more clearly than his being able to define exactly what he speaks about; while such blundering descriptions as these, above quoted shew nothing but the Doctor's insignificance*.

Man. '1. Human being. 2. Not a woman. 3. Not a boy.'—Woman. 'The female of the human race.'—Boy. '1. A male child; not a girl. 2. One in the state of *adulthood*.'—Girl. 'A young woman or child.' (*Female child he should have said.*) Damsel. 'A young gentlewoman; a wench; a country lass.' Lass. 'A girl; a maid; A young woman.'—Wench. '1. A young woman, 2. A young woman in contempt. 3. A strumpet.' Strumpet. 'A whore, a prostitute.'—Whore. '1. A woman who converses unlawfully with men; a fornicatress; an adulteress; a strumpet. 2. a prostitute; a woman who receives men for money.'—To whore, *v. n.* (from the noun) 'To converse unlawfully with the other sex.'—To whore, *v. a.* 'To corrupt with regard to chastity.'—Whoredom, *f.* (from whore) 'Fornication.'

(Here follow several other definitions on the same pure subject, which every body understands as well as Dr Johnson.)

Fishmonger. 'A dealer in fish.'—Young. 'Being in the first

'first part of life. *Not old.*'—Youngster, younker. 'A young person.'

(I pass by *ten* other articles, about *youthful* compounded of *youth* and *full*, &c. &c. because young people are in no danger of thinking themselves old.)

Yuck, *f. (jucken, Dutch.)* 'Itch.'—Old. 'Past the middle part of life; *not young*; not new; ancient; not modern.

'OF OLD. Long ago; from ancient times.'—Hum. interj.

'A sound implying doubt and deliberation—*Shakespeare.*'

Fiddle. 'A stringed instrument of music; a violin.'—To

fiddle, *v. n.* (from the noun) 'to play upon the fiddle.'—Fid-

dlefiddle, *f.* (a cant word) 'Trifles.'—Fiddlefaddle, *s.* 'Tri-

fling; giving trouble.'

(—His own example strengthens all his laws,
Sam is himself the true sublime he draws.)

Fiddler, *f.* (from *fiddle.*) 'A musician, one that plays upon a fiddle.'

Here follow fiddlestick, compounded of fiddle and stick, and warranted an English word by Hudibras; And

Fiddle-string, *f.* (Fiddle and string) 'the string of a fiddle.

'*Arbutnot.*'—Sheep's eye. 'A *modest and diffident look,*

'*such as lovers cast at their mistresses.*'—Love. 'Lewdness.'

And thirteen other explanations.—*Love-monger.* 'One who

'deals in affairs of love.'—*Lover.* 'One who is in love.'—

Loveletter. 'Letter of courtship.'—*Lovesecret.* 'Secret

'between lovers.'

(Besides near twenty other articles concerning this subject of equal obscurity and importance.)

Sweetheart. 'A lover or mistress.'—Mistress. 'A wo-

'man beloved and courted; a whore, a concubine.'—Wife,

'A woman that has a husband.'—A Runner. 'One who

'runs.'—Husband. 'The *correlative to wife.*'—Shrew. 'A

'*peculiar, malignant, clamorous, spitefull, vexatious, turbu-*

'*lent woman.*'—Scold. 'A *clamorous, rude, mean, low, foul-*

'*mouthed woman.*'—Henpecked, *q.* (*hen and pecked*). 'Go-

'*verned by the wife.*'—Her. *pron.* 'Belonging to a female;

'of a *she*; of a woman.'—Strap. 'A narrow long slip of

'cloth

'cloth or leather.'—Whip. 'An instrument of correction
'tough and pliant.'

(*Quere*, Whether is a cane, a strap, a bull's pizzle, a cat-o-nine-tails, or whalebone, here meant, as this definition answers them all?)

Cuckingstool, *f.* 'An engine invented for the punishment
'of scolds and *unquiet* women.'—Cuckoldom. 'The state of
'a cuckold.'

(Cuckold, *f.* Cuckold, *v. d.* Cuckoldy, *a.* and cuckoldmaker, *f.* (compounded of *cuckold*, and *maker*) we leave out, as the reader is already perhaps initiated in the mysteries of that subject.)

Arse, *f.* 'The buttocks.'—To hang an arse. 'To be tardy;
'sluggish.'—Buttock. 'The rump, the part near the tail.'
Rump. '1. The end of the backbone. 2. The buttocks.'
Thimble. 'A metal cover by which women (yea and *taylors*
'too Doctor) secure their fingers from the needle.'—Needle.
'A small instrument pointed at one end to pierce cloth, and
'perforated at the other to receive the thread.'—Gunpowder.
'The powder put into guns to be fired.'

And who is the wiser by this definition?

Maidenhead. Maidenhode. Maidenhood. 'Virginity,
'virgin purity, freedom from contamination.'—Oh. *interject.*
'An exclamation denoting pain, sorrow, or surprise.'—Hope.
'That which gives HOPE. The object of HOPE.'—Fear.
'1. Dread; horror; apprehension of danger. 2. Awe;
'dejection of mind. 3. Anxiety, solicitude,' &c.—Impa-
ience. 'Heat of passion; inability to suffer delay, eagerness.'
—Virgin. 'A woman not a mother.'—Virginity. 'Maiden-
'head; unacquaintance with man.'—Fart. 'Wind from be-
'hind. *Suckling.*'—To fart. 'To break wind behind. *Swift.*
Marriage. 'The act of uniting a man and woman for life.'
Repentance. 'Sorrow for any thing past.'—Kiss. 'Salute
'given by joining lips.'—Kisser. 'One that kisses.'—To
pliss, *v. n.* 'To make water. *L'Estrange.*'—Piss. *f.* (from
the verb) 'Urine; animal water. *Pope.*'—Pissburnt, *a.*
'Stained with urine.'—Pedant. 'A man vain of low know-
'ledge.'

Of these extracts, I suppose opinion is uniform. Every man who reads them, reads them with contempt. To tell us that a *man* is not a *beast*, seems to be an insult, rather than a definition. To say, that *young* is *not old*, and, that *old* is *not young*, of *old*, &c. is to say nothing at all. There is a medium; there is a state between these periods of life. And his definitions convey no meaning; for a man may be *not old* tho' he is *not young*. Many articles, such as whoring—whoremaster—whoremonger—whorishly, &c. are as indecent, as they are impertinent, and seem only designed to divert school boys. Hum—Yuck—Fiddle—Fiddler—Fiddlefaddle—Fiddlestick—Fiddlestring—Thimble—Needle—Gunpowder—Hope—O, and O—and Oh, and twenty-eight or thirty explanations of the particle *on*, are left without remark to the reader's penetration. Some are well enough acquainted with a *maidenhead*, and such as are not, will be no wiser by reading Dr Johnson: For he says, That it is *virginity*, and that again is explained (like more than half the words in his book) by the word it explains. Nor can a *maidenhead* 'ensure freedom from *pollution*.' For a girl may be polluted, without losing her *maidenhead*; and on the other hand, the Doctor dare not say that *marriage* is in any sense of the word *pollution*. Love, he calls *lewdness*, and he may as well say, that *light* is *darkness*. His admirers will answer, that he also gives the right meaning; but let them tell, why he gave any besides the right meaning, and why he collected such a load of blunders into his book. Or since he did collect them, why he did not mark them down as wrong. For in the preface to his octavo, he tells us, that it is written for 'explaining terms of science.' But to select twenty barbarous misapplications of a word, is not explaining the word, but only *confusion worse confounded*. Indeed this whole preface is a piece of the most profound nonsense, that ever insulted the common sense of the world. A virgin, is a *woman not a mother*. But many wives, and many concubines too, have never propagated the Species, though they had (as Othello says) a thousand times committed the act of shame. From this literary chaos, a foreigner would perhaps imagine that *they* were *virgins*.

Part of his book has value ; but take it all in all, and perhaps it is the strangest farrago that ever pedantry put together. It will be said that these are partial specimens, but we shall trace him through many *ramifications* of learning, and find his ignorance extreme. A sensible reader will try his own abilities, in judging of the Doctor's *great* performance. Nor will he throw down this pamphlet, because by some unaccountable infatuation, the dictionary has for six and twenty years been admired by thousands and ten thousands who have never *seen* it. Let us exert that courage of thought, and that contempt of quackery, which to feel, and to display, is the privilege and the pride of a Briton. In a country where no man fears his king, can any man fear the sound of a celebrated name, or crouch behind the banner of Dullness, because it is born by SAMUEL JOHNSON, A. M. & LL. D.?

‘ The highest pleasure which nature has indulged to sensitive perception is that of rest after fatigue *.’ And *sensitive* is defined ‘ *having sense or perception ; but not reason.*’ If I understand the meaning of this passage, it is, that no pleasure communicated through any of the organs of sense is equal to that of *rest*. This assertion leads to the most absurd consequences. In man to separate sensitive from rational perception appears to be simply impossible. Even rest is not in strict language any pleasure. It is merely a mitigation of pain. The reader will decide whether I do the Doctor justice, while I say, that he must have been petrified when he composed this maxim. Thirst and hunger had been long forgot. Handel and Titian had no power to charm. We learn that a lover can receive, and his mistress can bestow nothing that is equal to the rapturous enjoyment of an *easy chair*. The thought is new; no human being ever did, or ever will conceive it, except the immortal Dr Samuel Johnson.

In his life †, the Doctor says, ‘ That Cowley having when very young read Spenser, became *irrecoverably* a poet ‡.’

And

* Rambler, No. 150.

† Vol. I. P. 3. 12mo edition.

‡ His impressions had been very slight, for Cowley has nothing of the melody, or magnificence of the Fairy Queen. Of its great author we know little but that he was praised, and neglected, unfortunate,

And he adds a remark that shows his depth: 'Such are the accidents which, sometimes remembered, and sometimes perhaps forgotten, PRODUCE that particular designation of mind and propensity for some certain science or employment, which is commonly called genius. The true genius is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction. The great painter of the present age had the first fondness for his art excited, by a perusal of Richardson's treatise.' This drawling definition contradicts common sense. Does the Doctor mean that Cowley would have become a painter by perusing Richardson? or that Reynolds would have become a poet by perusing Spenser? This is the clear inference from his words, and its absurdity is 'too evident for detection, and too gross for aggravation *.' At this rate Garrick might have eclipsed Newton, and Hume defeated Frederick. Plato possessed 'a mind of large general powers.' He read Homer. He wrote verses, and he found that he could not be a poet. The Doctor himself has 'large general powers;' but he could never have been made a decent dancing master. Marcel might have broke his heart, before his pupil had acquired three steps of a minuet. In his dictionary the Doctor, without a word of *accidental* determi-

E

nation

and poor; and, from his epitaph, that he died young. His subject is not happy, his words are often obsolete, and his stanza can hardly please us long. But we may presume that he wanted leisure to study the great models of antiquity: That he wanted that ease of heart so needful to the success of a poet: And that his defects are entirely owing to the bad taste of his age, and the hardships of his life. Had he lived longer, and enjoyed a competence, Spenser would perhaps have been very little inferior to any human genius.

* Dr Johnson on Cymbeline. The same sentiment is started in his account of Pope. 'To the particular species of excellent men are directed, not by an ascendant planet, or predominant humour, but by the first book which they read, some early conversation which they heard, or some accident which excited ardour and emulation.' The Doctor is in this passage censuring Pope's ignorance of human nature—while his own marvellous and extreme stupidity makes him unworthy of censure. The reader will not realize Montesquieu's remark, That when we attempt to prove things so evident we are 'sure never to convince.

nation, defines genius to be, 'disposition of *nature* by which 'any one is qualified for some peculiar employment.' And here I cannot help adding, that the 'great painter' has by stepping out of his own line, discovered the narrowness of even a great man's knowledge. The president affirms*, 'That scarce a poet from Homer down to Dryden ever felt his fire diminished merely by his advance in years.' There is nothing more absurd, says Cicero, than what we hear asserted by some of the philosophers. Even in painting, the speculator's own profession, this rule does not hold. Cellini tells us, that Michael Angelo's genius decayed with years; and he speaks of it as common to all artists. This notion was perhaps grafted on an opinion of the Doctor's about the durability of Waller's genius†. But Waller was a feeble poet, who never had a genius, so that we need not wonder he never lost it. All his verses are hardly worth one of Johnson's imitations of Juvenal.

'Physicians and lawyers are no friends to religion, and many conjectures have been formed to discover the reason of such a combination between men who agree in nothing else; and who seem to be less affected in their own provinces by religious opinions than any other part of the community†.' He then proceeds in the tone of an author, who has made a discovery to inform us of the cause. 'They have all seen a parson, seen him in a habit different from their own, and therefore declared war against him.' But this can be no motive for peculiar antipathy to parsons, allowing such antipathy to exist; for in habit all other classes differ no less from the clergy, than the lawyer and physician. But the remark itself is frivolous and false. Boerhaave and Hale were men of eminent piety. Physicians and lawyers have as much regard for religion as any other people generally have. Their agreeing in nothing else is another of the blunders crowded in to this passage. But I have too much respect for the reader's understanding

* Annual Register 1779, Part II. p. 148. I have shortened his words, but have given their full meaning.

† Life of Waller.

‡ Rambler, No. 9.

understanding to insist any farther on this point. The *conjectures*, the *combination*, and the *declaration of war*, exist nowhere but in the Doctor's pericranium. He was at a loss what to say, and the position is only to be regarded as a *turbid ebullition of amphibological inanity*. But while we thus meet with something that is ridiculous in every page, we are not to forget even for a moment, what we have often heard, and what is most unquestionably *true*, viz. That Dr Johnson is the father of British literature, the capital author of his age, and the greatest man in Europe * ! ! !

' We are by our occupations, education, and habits of life, divided almost into different species, who regard one another for the most part with scorn and malignity †.' The Doctor is himself a proof, that a man may look upon almost all of his own profession with scorn and malignity : So that between his precept and his practice, the world seems bad enough. But I hope every heart revolts at this gross insult on the characters of mankind. He brings as an instance the aversion that subsists between soldiers and sailors. There no doubt have been jealousies and bloodshed between these two classes of men, but the same accidents fall out far more frequently between soldiers themselves. The *scorn* and *malignity* of admirals seldom affect any line of service but their own. His captain of foot ‡ who saw no danger in a sea-fight was a fool, and just such a specimen of English officers, as the Doctor himself is of English travellers. Our repulse at Carthage-*na* was not owing to an antipathy between the *common* men. Our late victory at Savannah proves with what ardour they can unite. The Doctor has insulted almost every order of society.

Coblers with coblers smoke away the night,
Even players in the common cause, unite.
Authors alone with more than mortal rage,
Eternal war with brother authors wage §.

' To raise esteem we must benefit others,' is an assertion advanced

* Vide the life of Garrick by Mr Davies.

† Rambler, No. 16a.

‡ Ibid.

§ Churchill's Apology.

advanced in the same page. But the Doctor, if he knows any thing, must know that *esteem* is often felt for an enemy. We value for his courage or ingenuity the man who never heard our name, or who would not give a guinea to save us from perdition. We can esteem the hero who butchers nations, and the pedant who perplexes truth. Marlborough's avarice led him to continue the continental war, till he laid the great foundation of our public debt. He was detested as much as any general now in England, and yet 'he was so great a man' (said one of his enemies) 'that I have forgot his faults.' While they suffer for his baseness, posterity pay the due tribute of esteem to the Duke's genius and intrepidity.

In every point of view this maxim is '*the baseless fabric of a vision*;' And what had so far obumbrated the Rambler's powers of *ratiocination*, it is not easy to guess. We sometimes feel it impossible to esteem even our benefactor. 'I have received obligations' (said Chatterton) 'without being obliged.' And of consequence, his benefactors had forfeited his esteem. The father of British literature has in forty other places contradicted his own words. He has proved that esteem is involuntary, and that benefits do not always buy it.

Corking pin. 'A pin of the largest size.'—Corky. 'Consisting of cork.'—Bum. 'The part upon which we sit.'

Do you mean a chair Doctor?

Bumbailiff, *f.* (from *bum* and *baillif*) 'a bailiff of the meanest kind.'—Butter. 'An *unctuous* substance made,' &c. (Here follow to butter, *v. a.* Butter-milk—Butter-print—Butterwoman—Buttery, *a.* Buttery, *f.*)

Butterfly. 'A beautiful insect.'—Buttertooth. 'The great broad fore-tooth.'—Off. prep. 'Not *en*.'—Postage. 'Money paid for conveyance of a letter.'

(Postboy, Poster, Posteriors, Posthaste, Posthorse, Posthouse, Postilion, Postmaster, Postoffice, Postscript, with all their loads of roots, and authorities, we pass by *brevitatis causa*.)

Potato, *f.* 'An *esculent* root.'—Turnip. 'A white *esculent* root.'—Parsley. 'A Plant.'—Parsnep. 'A plant.'—Carrot. 'A garden root.'—Cauliflower. 'Cauliflower.'—Cauliflower.

Cauliflower. 'A species of *cabbage*.'—**Cabbage.** 'A plant.'

(**Pay, Doctor** what is the difference between, Parsley, Parf-neg, Colliflower, Cauliflower and Cabbage, for you give plant as the definition of the whole?)

Pit. 'A hole in the ground.'—**Pin.** 'A short wire, with a sharp point, and round head, used by women to fasten their clothes.'—**Plate.** 'A small shallow vessel of metal (or of stone or wood Doctor) on which meat is eaten.'—**Play.** 'Net work.'—**Player.** 'One who plays.'—**Pole.** 'A long staff.'—**Poker.** 'The iron bar with which men stir the fire.'—**Pork.** 'Swine's flesh unsalted.'

(Here you may find *Porker, Porkeater, Porket, Parkling*, with all their derivations, definitions, and authorities.)

Porridge. 'Food made by boiling meat in water.'—**Porridge-pot,** (*porridge* and *pot*) **Bacon.** 'The pot in which meat is boiled for a family.'—**Porringer,** (from *porridge*) 'a vessel in which broth is eaten.'—**Periwig.** 'Adscitious hair.'—**Peep.** 'A fly look.' Vid. also *peep-hole* and *peeping-hole*.—**Bart.** 'Some thing less than the whole.' And thirteen other ramifications.—**Pulse.** 'Oscillation; vibration.'—**Puff.** 'A quick blast with the mouth.'

Vid. in same page, **Pudding,** *f.* from the *Swedish*, (which is a blunder, for it is from the *French boudin*) **Pudding Pie,** from *Pudding* and *Pie*, and **Pudding-time,** from *Pudding* and *time*. **Puddle,** *f.* **Puddle,** *v. a.* & **Puddly,** &c.

Porter. 'One who carries burdens for hire,' &c.

(But the Doctor has it seems never seen a *pot* of porter.)

Shadow. 'Opacity, darkness. *Shade.*'—**Shade.** 'The cloud or opacity made by interception of the light. Darkness. 'Obscurity. *Umbrage.*'—**Shadiness.** 'The state of being shady; umbrageousness.'—**Shady.** 'Full of shade; MILDLY, gloomy.' (No light, but rather darkness visible.)

Sevenscore. 'Seven times twenty.'—**Shadowy.** 'Dark, opaque.'—**To yawn.** 'To gape, to oscitate, to have the mouth opened involuntarily.'

(This may be *gagging*, &c. as well as yawning.)

Yawn, *f.* 'Oscitation, gape, HIATUS.'—**Yea.** 'Yes.'
Yes.

Yes. 'A term of affirmation, the affirmative particle opposed to *no*.'

See also in the same place, *Yest*. Year. (12 months.) *Yesterday*, *f*. The day last past, the next day before to-day. *Yesterday*, *ad*. *Yesternight*, *f*. *Yesternight*, *ad*. *Yet*. *con*. *Yet*. *ad*. Nine times explained.

Vent. 'A small *aperture* ; a hole ; a *spiracle*.'—*Wind*. 'A *flowing* wave of air ; *flatulence* ; windiness.'—*Winker*. 'One who winks.'—To wink. 'To shut the eyes.'
(No, Sir, unless you open them directly.)

Window. 'An *aperture* in a building by which air and light are *intromitted*.'

N. B. Almost the whole of the same page is daubed over with such jargon.

Selenographical. *Selenographic*. 'Belonging to *Selenography*.'

And what is *Selenography*?

Salsamentarious. 'Belonging to salt.'

(This word is one of his own making I fancy, for he gives no authority, and I can meet with nobody that ever heard of it in English.)

Said. 'Aforesaid.'—*Sailer*. *Sailor*. 'A *seaman*.'—*Saltcellar*. 'Vessel of salt set on the table.'—*Maxim*. 'An *axiom*.'—*Scoundrel*. 'A mean rascal ; a low petty villain.'—*Rascal*. 'A mean fellow ; a scoundrel.'—*Villain*. 'A wicked wretch.'—*Wretch*. 'A miserable mortal.'—*No*. *ad*. 'The word of refusal. 2. The word of denial.'—*No*, *a*. '1. Not any ; none. 2. No one ; NONE ; not any one.'

(Had this word *none* altered its meaning, before the Doctor got to the end of the line?)

Nobody. (*No* and *body*) 'No one ; not any one.'

(See also *Nod*, *v. a*. *Nod*, *f*. *Nodder*. *Noddle*. *Noddy*, &c.)

None, '1. Not one. 2. Not any. 3. Not other.'—*Nook*. 'A corner.'—*North*, *a*. 'Northern.'

(I leave out *ten* other articles on this subject.)

Nothing. 'Negation of being ; not any thing,' and *seven-teen*

teen other definitions.—Afore. (*a* and *fore*) ‘before nearer in place to any thing.’

(See also in same page, Afore, *ad.* Aforegoing, Aforehand, Aforementioned, Aforenamed, Aforesaid, Aforetime.)

‘There is a certain line beyond which if ridicule attempts to go, it becomes itself ridiculous, and there is a sphere of criticism in that particular region, in which if the critic plays his batteries on too contemptible objects, he must unavoidably depart from his proper dignity, and must himself be an object of the railery he would convey *.’

HEAR THE DOCTOR ON MUSIC.

Music. ‘1. The science of harmonical sounds. 2. Instrumental, or vocal *harmony*.’—Harmony. ‘Just proportion of sound.’—Melody. ‘Music; *harmony* of sound.’—Tune. ‘*Tune* is a diversity of notes put together.’ *Locke, Milton, Dryden*.—Tenour, *f.* ‘A sound in music.’—Treble, *f.* ‘A sharp sound.’—Bass, *a.* ‘Grave, deep.’—Flute. ‘A musical pipe; a pipe with stops for the fingers.’—Fife. ‘A pipe blown to the drum.’—Hautboy. ‘A wind instrument.’

(The French horn is wanting, but we can be no great losers.)

Drum. ‘An instrument of military music.’

(But this may be a fife or a trumpet, &c. as well as a Drum.)

(See also *Drum-major*, (from *Drum* and *Major*), *Drum-maker*, *Drummer*, and *Drumstick*, from *Drum* and *Stick*.)

Trumpet. ‘An instrument of martial music sounded by the breath.’

One requires little skill in music to see that the Doctor knows nothing of that science. He confounds *melody* with *harmony*; the one consisting in a succession of agreeable sounds, and the other arising from coexisting sounds. His account of a *tune* is curious. And we may say in his own style, that his dictionary is ‘a diversity of words put together.’ His numerous omissions on this head will neither afflict, nor surprise us. For he who cannot point out the difference between a Trumpet and a Drum cannot deserve a farther hearing.

* Monthly Review, on Dr Graham’s Pindaricks.

ing. But it must mortify and amaze us to reflect on the partial distribution of fame. For this book exhibits in every page, perhaps without a single exception, a variety of errors and absurdities. They are clear to the darkest ignorance. They are level to the lowest understanding, and yet our language is exhausted in the praise of *their* author. *Proxi- mis audiendum!*

Poem. 'The work of a poet; a *metrical* composition.'—

Poet. 'An inventor; an author of fiction; a writer of poems; one who writes in measure.'—Poetess. 'A *female* poet.'—

Poetry. 'Metrical composition; the art or practice of writing poems. 2. Poems, poetical pieces.'—Tragedy. 'A dramatic representation of a *serious* action.'—Comedy. 'A dramatic representation of the *lighter faults* of mankind.'—

Eclogue. 'A pastoral poem so called because Virgil called his pastorals eclogues.'—Tragic-comedy. 'A drama composed of *merry and serious* events.'—Farce. 'A dramatic representation written *without* regularity.'—Elegy. '1.

'A mournful song. 2. A funeral song. 3. A short poem, without points or turns.'—Lyd. 'A small short poem.'—

Epigram. 'A short poem terminating in a *point*.'—Epic. '1. Narrative; comprising narrations, not acted, but rehearsed. It is usually supposed to be heroic.'—Epistle. 'A letter and

'a letter again is an epistle.'—Ode. 'A poem written to be sung to music; a lyric poem.'—Ballad. 'A song.'—

(See also ballad-singer, &c.)

Song. 'A poem to be *modulated* by the voice; a ballad.'—

Catch. 'A song sung in *succession*.'

Dr Johnson has written far better verses, than perhaps any man now alive in England. He is said to be the first *critic* in that country, and therefore we have the highest reason to expect elegant entertainment and philosophical instruction, when the poet and critic is to speak in his own character.

But here, as in the rest of *this* work, the native vigour of his mind seems entirely to leave him. We look around us in vain for the well known hand of the Rambler, for the sensible and feeling historian of Savage, the caustic and elegant imitator of Juvenal, the man of learning, and taste, and genius. The

reader's

reader's eye is repelled from the Doctor's pages, by their 'hopeless sterility' and their 'horrid nakedness.'

The greater part of the definitions in this work may be divided into three classes. The erroneous, ænigmatical, and superfluous. And of the sixteen last quoted, every one comes under some, or all of these heads.

A poem is said to be the work of a poet: And so were Dryden's prefaces. Again it is a *metrical composition*. No age had ever a greater profusion of rhimes than the present. In Oxford there are two thousand people all of whom occasionally make verses. Yet in this abundance of *metrical composition*, we have very few poems.

A poet is—1. 'An inventor,' but so was Tubal Cain. 2. 'An author of fiction,' but so was Descartes. 3. 'A writer of poems;' but as he has not been able to point out what a poem is, the definition goes for nothing. 4. 'One who writes in measure.' But in Cowley's life, the Doctor himself speaks of men, who thought they were writing poetry, when they were only writing verses. We are still only where we set out.

The third definition is superfluous, and the fourth and fifth are very clumsy. The sixth and seventh are still worse, for comedy* is frequently very serious and tender, as well as tragedy; and that again represents the *lighter* faults of mankind, as well as comedy. By the way, what are these *lighter* faults, which our comedy is said to represent. In our comick scenes, adultery, and impiety, appear to be the chief pulse of merriment. What the Doctor says of a farce is false; and elegy is not *always* mournful. What can he mean by a poem without points or turns? An Idyll is a small short poem. An Epigram is a *short* poem; but so is an Epitaph, or a Sonnet, and often an Ode, a Fable, &c. An Epigram terminates in a point. Wonderful! Of the remaining six definitions, the reader will determine if they be not every one of them pitiful; and if it was possible for the Doctor, or any other man, to convey less information, on so plain a subject.

In comparing this with other dictionaries of the same kind,

F

it

* Vide Terence and the Careless Husband.

‘it will be found that the senses of each word are more *copiously* enumerated, and more *clearly* explained.’

Of his *clear* and *copious* explanations, accept a new sample.

Beast. ‘An animal distinguished from birds, insects, fishes, and man.’ It is also distinguished from *reptiles*, though the Doctor cannot tell us *how*.—A Reptile is (but sometimes only), ‘*An animal that creeps upon many feet*.’—A Snail is ‘A slimy animal that creeps upon plants.’ Many animals creep on plants, besides a Snail. He dare not venture to say that a Snail is a *Reptile*, for he had said that a Reptile creeps upon many feet, and a Snail has none. Locke is quoted to prove that a *Bird* is a *fowl*, and we are edified by hearing that a *fowl* is a *bird*, or a *winged* animal. But this may be the *bar*, the *fly*-ing fish, or the butterfly. He should have said a *feathered* animal. We are informed from Creech and Shakespeare, that a fish is *an animal that inhabits the water*. But besides amphibious animals, from the crocodile down to the water-mouse, we have seen *Eruca Aquatica*, or Water Caterpillars, that are truly aquatic animals, yet are perfectly different from all fish. Insects are ‘so called from a separation in the middle of their bodies, whereby they are cut into two parts, which are joined together by a small ligature, as we see in common flies.’

Quere. How many insects answer this description?

Dr Johnson had certainly no great occasion to quote Peacham and Swift before he durst tell us, that a *Liby* is a *flower*, and *Posteriors* the *hinder* parts. He forgot to introduce the Dean when affirming, that a T—d is *excrement*; but both Pope and Swift (among others) are cited for P—s and F—t.

His learning and his ignorance amaze us in every page:—Pox are, ‘1. *Pustules*; *efflorescences*; *exanthematic* eruptions. 2. The venereal disease.’ A particular species of it only. The first part of this *clear* explanation would puzzle every old woman in England, though most of them know more of small pox than the Rambler himself.

Day. ‘1. The time between the rising and the setting of the sun, called the *artificial* day. 2. The time from noon

‘to
* Vide Preface to Johnson’s octavo Dictionary, 4th edition.

‘to noon, called the *natural* day.’—Natural. ‘What is produced by nature,’ therefore as the day from sunrise to sunset is ‘produced by nature,’ *that*, and that only, must be the *natural* day.—Artificial. ‘Made by *art*, not natural, fictitious, not ‘genuine.’ The day from noon to noon is certainly *not* natural, and of consequence, *that*, and that only, must be the *artificial* day.—Night is, ‘1. The time of darkness: 2. The ‘time between sunset, and sunrise.’

When the Doctor acquires the first elements of geography, he will learn that in no climate of the world is the time between sunset and sunrise all of it the time of *darkness*. Even at the equator, night does not succeed till half an hour after sunset. If he has ever seen the sun rise here, he must also have seen that we have always day light long before the sun appears. In June our nights are never entirely dark. Neither is *night*, when it really comes on, constantly the ‘time of darkness,’ for the Rambler may often see to read his own mistakes by moonshine. Of this profound period, the first part contradicts the second, and every body sees the absurdity of both. What are we to think of this definer of ‘scientific terms,’ when his errors have not even the negative merit of consistency.

Snowbroth, *f. (snow and broth)* ‘very cold liquor.’ And Shakespeare is quoted; but when the poet said * that the blood of an old courtier was as cold as *Snowbroth*, he meant *melted snow*. Now it is somewhat odd that every body can see Shakespeare’s exact idea, but this learned commentator.—Lion. ‘The fiercest and most magnanimous of fourfooted ‘beasts.’ But fierceness cannot consist with magnanimity †. Other animals exceed the Lion in fierceness; and a Horse, an Elephant, or a dog, equal his magnanimity. This definition contains nothing but a single contradiction, of which neither end is true.—Thunder. ‘Thunder is a most *bright flame* ‘rising on a sudden, moving with great violence, and with a ‘very *rapid* velocity, through the air, according to any determination, and commonly ending with a loud noise or rattling.’ Shakespeare. Milton.

It is needless to say that the philosopher has confounded thunder

* Vide Measure for measure.

† Vide Dictionary.

thunder with lightning. The inelegance and tautology of this definition, we pass by; but why should he profane the names of Milton and Shakespeare to support such monstrous nonsense?

Stone. 'Stones are bodies insipid, hard, not *ductile* or *malleable*, nor *soluble* in water.' This definition answers wood, or glass, or the bones of an animal.—One. 'Less than two; single; denoted by an unit.' *Raleigh.*

Without consulting Raleigh, we know that a man may have 'less than two' guineas in his pocket, and yet have more than one. However we are not sure, that he has even a single farthing. One is *single*, but we are only where we started, for *single* (*more Lexiphanico*) is 'one, not double; not more than one.' The matter is little mended, when he subjoins that one is *that which is expressed by an unit*, for this may be the numerator of any fraction. Take this book to pieces, put it in the scales of common sense, and see how it kicks the beam.

A circle is, '1. A line continued till it ends where it began. 2. The space inclosed in a circular line. 3. A round body, an orb.'

The first of these definitions does not distinguish a circle from a triangle, or any other plain figure. He might have found a circle properly defined in Euclid, and a hundred other books. What are we to think of the rest of his mathematical definitions? Well, but he clears up this point, for a circle is 'the space inclosed in a circular line.' The third definition is no less erroneous than the second, for if a man were to mention the circle of the earth, we could not suspect that he meant the globe itself.

Botany and the electrical fluid, are not inserted. Electricity he terms a *property* in bodies, and from this expression, and from all he says of the subject, we can ascertain his ignorance of that most curious and important branch of natural philosophy. *Electricity* in general signifies 'the operations of a very subtil fluid, commonly invisible, but sometimes the object of our sight and other senses. It is one of the chief agents employed in producing the phenomena of nature.'

* *tūre*.¹ Its identity with lightning was discovered in 1732, three years before the publication of Johnson's folio dictionary. For the author then to talk of it as 'a *peculiar* property, 'supposed once to belong chiefly to amber,' is shameful. It shews us the depth of his learning, and the degree of attention which he thought proper to bestow on his *great* work.

Elasticity. 'Force in bodies, by which they endeavour to *restore* themselves.' To what? To their former figure, after some external pressure? And without adding some words like these the definition conveys no meaning.

Of Water, we get a very long winded account, which neither Johnson nor any body else can comprehend, for he sinks into mere jargon. Canst thou conceive (gentle reader) what are 'small, *smooth*, hard, *porous*, spherical particles' of water? *Water*, says Newton, 'is a fluid tasteless *flū*, which nature changes by heat, into vapour, and by cold into ice, which is a hard fusible brittle stone, and this stone returns into water by heat *.'—Boerhaave calls water, 'a kind of glass that melts at a heat any thing greater than 32 degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer. The boundary between water and ice †.'

Claw. 'The *foot* of a beast or bird armed with sharp *nails*.' Nail. 'The talons of birds or beasts.'—Talon. 'The claw of a bird of prey.'

Here a *nail* is *talons*; these again are a *claw*; and a *claw* is said to be a *foot* (alias a *nail*) armed with *nails*. Here the quotations are literal and complete. The words are all plain English. And if you cannot comprehend a *nail* armed with *nails*, wait upon Dr Johnson, and perhaps he will explain it.

Legion. 'A body of Roman soldiers; consisting of about five thousand.'

This is not accurate. The number of men in a Roman legion rose by degrees from about 3200 to near 7000.

Decemvirate. 'The dignity and office of the *ten* governors of Rome.'—Tribune. 'An officer of Rome chosen by the people.'—Censor. 'An officer of Rome, who had the power

* Optics, P. 349.

† Chem. i. P. 399. 614.

‘of correcting manners.’—Consul. ‘The chief magistrate in the Roman republic.’

Wherein did the Decemviri differ from the King, the Consul, the Dictator, the Triumvir, the Military Tribune, the Cæsar, and the Emperor, for all these were likewise ‘Governors of Rome?’ The Decemviri were also an inferior set of men appointed to take care of the Sybil’s books, to conduct colonies, &c. So that his definition is very incomplete. A Tribune was ‘chosen by the people.’ But this does not distinguish him from many other magistrates. The Censor had ‘the power of correcting manners;’ but he had many powers as well as that, and every magistrate had that power as well as him, though it was a province more peculiarly his. The Censor is an officer still known in Venice, and in countries where the liberty and abuse of the press are unknown, the licensers of books are called Censors, though the Doctor does not give us these two explanations of the word. The Consul is ‘the chief magistrate in the Roman republic.’ He was a magistrate long after the republic was dissolved. But tho’ he was commonly *one* of the chief magistrates in Rome, he was never the *chief*, as the Doctor roundly expresses it, for he had always a colleague. The Censor was at least his equal, and the Dictator was by law his superior. What we learn of the Centurion, the Triumvir, and the Licor, is very trifling. Innumerable words that puzzle the plain reader of a Roman historian are wanting, such as an Ædile, a Prætor, a Quæstor, a Cæsar, a Military Tribune, the Hastati, Principes, Triarii, Velites, the Labarum, or Imperial Standard, the Balistæ, the Balearians, &c. A *Maniple* is ‘a small band of soldiers.’ And a Cohort is ‘a troop of soldiers, containing about 500 foot.’ A Cohort was in general the tenth part of the foot in a Roman Legion, consequently their number varied, and the Prætorian Cohort, or that to which the standard was intrusted, contained, at least in later ages, many more men than any of the rest. But in the very page where this concise author thus blunders about a Cohort, he takes care to tell us, that *Coiton*, is *copulation*; the *act of generation*. That cold ‘is not hot—not warm—chill—having sense

‘ of

'nef cold—having cold qualities.' That coldly 'is without
'*reheat*;' that coldness is, 'want of heat;' and a heap of similar
jargon:—Blot. 'A blot.'—Blur. 'A blon.'

The Doctor's admirers will answer, that in so great a work
there was no room for long definitions. I reply, that his ac-
count of Whipgraffing, of Will-with-a-Wisp, of a Wood-
louse, and of the Stool of Repentance, are very long; that
if he was to say no more of a Roman Consul, he should have
said nothing at all; and that there are other books of the
same kind, and of half the price too, which find room for co-
pious and useful definitions. Pardon's dictionary is not much
less than the Doctor's octavo, though it is only six shillings;
(7th edition) and of many articles, such as the Roman Legion,
there is a very clear and full explanation. Besides which, it
contains a description of the counties, the cities, and the mar-
ket towns in England; and in the end of the book there is in-
serted a list of near 7000 proper names, none of which are to
be found in the Doctor's dictionary. With what then has
Johnson filled his book? With words of his own coining, with
roots, and authorities often ridiculous, and always useless;
or with definitions impertinent and erroneous. A Bashaw he
calls 'the viceroy of a province;' and he might as well have
said that every man in England is six feet high. A Condoler
is, 'one who compliments another upon his misfortunes.'

From the Rambler's accurate and profound knowledge of
anatomy, we must form very high expectations as to his know-
ledge of medicine, and we are not disappointed; for AR-
THRITIS is 'the Gout,' and the GOUT is 'Arthritis; a pe-
riodical disease attended with great pain.' The first part of
this definition is not true; and the second will not distinguish
the Gout from the Gravel, the Tooth-ach, &c. &c. GRAVEL
is 'sandy matter concreted in the kidneys,' and as often in the
bladder too. His account of a Gonorrhœa is no less incom-
plete. A Headach is 'a pain in the head.' Jaundice is 'a
distemper from obstructions of the glands of the liver, which
prevent the gall being duly separated from the blood.' The
Doctor seems to have borrowed his system of anatomy from
the antients; for the moderns have discovered that the liver
(which

(which he ingeniously calls 'one of the entrails') is itself an indivisible gland. The Jaundice arises from an obstruction in the biliary ducts. Tympany is 'a kind of obstructed flatulence, that swells the body like a drum.' Flatulence is not explained; but Flatulency is said to be "windiness; fulness of wind." And what does he mean by an obstructed fulness of wind, or by his simile of a drum. His descriptions of the the Rickets—Rupture—Rheumatism—Scrophula—Dropy—Scurvy, &c. are equally perspicuous and perfect. The Doctor had no great occasion to attest, that 'the English dictionary was written with little assistance of the learned'. For in almost every department of human learning, from astronomy down to common grammar, his ignorance appears amazing. His book is a mass of words without ideas. Through the whole there runs a radical corruption of truth and common sense. It is astonishing that the *Letter* has hardly ever been attacked in this quarter by his innumerable enemies.

I anticipate the answer of his admirers, viz. That 'the nature of his work did not admit of a copious explanation for every word.' But let them tell why he gave such a strange jumble of quotations in support of a word of which he knows not the meaning, and must we believe that the nature (forsooth!) of any work whatever, can entitle its author to write nonsense, or to write on a subject of which he is ignorant. Indeed the Doctor himself has repeatedly declared, that his book is deformed by a profusion of errors, and those who are unwilling to depend on my assertion, will depend on the Rambler's. He says, 'I cannot hope, in the warmest moments to preserve so much caution through so long a work, as not OFTEN to sink into negligence, or to obtain so much knowledge of all its parts as not FREQUENTLY to fall by ignorance. I expect that sometimes the desire of accuracy will urge me to superfluities, and sometimes the fear of prolixity betray me to omissions; that in the extent of such variety, I shall be OFTEN bewildered, and in the mazes of such intricacy, I shall be

• Preface to Folio Dictionary.

• Perhaps he means, in defining *Thurkey*, *Plum-porridge*, the particles *er*, &c.

“ be frequently entangled, &c. *” Here is a beautiful confession, which he afterwards recants; for ‘despondency has never so far prevailed, as to depress me to *negligence*,’ &c. † But his recantation is in effect immediately *re-recanted*, and we are informed, ‘That a few *wild blunders*, and *RISIBLE absurdities*, from which no work of such multiplicity was ever free, may for a time furnish folly with laughter, and harden ignorance into contempt ‡.’ That this distrust of his own merit did not arise from want of pride or vanity we discover within a few lines: For ‘in this work’ (*the English dictionary*, as its author modestly terms it) ‘when it shall be found that *much is omitted*, let it not be forgotten that *much likewise is performed*. If our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt, which no human powers have hitherto completed.—I may surely be contented without the praise of perfection, which if I could obtain, in this gloom of solitude’ (*the neighbourhood of London*) ‘what would it avail me §?’ And again, ‘I have devoted this book, the labour of years, to the honour of my country ||.’ *Item*. ‘I cannot but have some degree of parental fondness.’ But after all this parental fondness, this zeal for the honour of his country, the Doctor’s extraordinary preface concludes in perhaps the most extraordinary language that ever flowed from an author’s pen. ‘Success and miscarriage are *empty sounds*: I therefore dismiss it’ (his dictionary) ‘with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure, or from praise.’ All this is surely despicable. The booksellers had paid their workman on the nail, or the Doctor would have had something to hope and fear. But an honest and sensible tradesman, though paid beforehand, will always wish and endeavour to please his employers. From this writer’s own words, it would appear that he is incapable of a sentiment so generous.

Rowe (the famous tragic poet) ‘seldom moves either pity or terror ¶.’ *Paradise Lost* is a work which ‘the reader
G. admires,

* Letter to the Earl of Chesterfield. † Preface to folio dictionary.

‡ Preface to folio dictionary. § Ibid. ¶ Ibid. ¶ Rowe’s Life.

‘ admires, and lays down, *and forgets to take up again* *.’ But Rowe’s *Lucan*, which is very little read, the Doctor pronounces to be ‘ one of the *greatest* productions of English poetry.’ Dr Johnson’s sycophants have asserted, that ‘ in the walks of criticism and biography he has long been without a rival.’ And they are no doubt ready to support their leader in his assertion that Swift ‘ excites neither surprise nor admiration.’ The Doctor’s disregard for the universal sentiments of mankind often excites surprise, but never admiration. Let us here apply his own observation, that ‘ there is often found in commentaries a spontaneous train of invective and contempt, more eager and venomous than is vented by the most furious controvertist in politics, against whom he is hired to defame †.’ We may as usual illustrate the Rambler’s remark by his own example: ‘ Theobald, a man of narrow comprehension, and small acquisitions, with no native and intrinsic splendour of genius, with little of the artificial light of learning—his contemptible ostentation I have frequently concealed.’ The definer of a fiddlestick proceeds thus: ‘ I have in some places shewn him, as he would have shewn himself for the reader’s diversion, that the *inflated* emptiness of some notes may justify or excuse the contraction of the rest.—Theobald, thus weak and ignorant, thus *mean*, and FAITHLESS, thus petulant and ostentatious, by the good luck of having Pope for his enemy, has escaped, and escaped *alone* with reputation from this undertaking. So easily is he praised whom no man can envy ‡.’ How does it appear that Theobald was weak and ignorant? The Doctor himself had in the preceding page told us, that ‘ he (Theobald) collated the antient copies, and rectified *many* errors.’ This assertion our author, with his wonted consistency, has flatly contradicted in the very next line. ‘ What *little* he (Theobald) did was commonly right.’ Has the Doctor adduced, or has he attempted to adduce evidence that Theobald was *mean* and *faithless*, or what occasion had his successor to load this man’s memory with such injurious epithets? The Rambler’s

* Life of Milton.

† Preface to Shakespeare.

‡ Ibid.

bler's burst of vulgarity can reflect disgrace on nobody but himself. It is certain, though he thinks proper to deny it, that he considered Theobald as an object of envy ; yet he is obliged to confess that Theobald ' escaped, and escaped *alone*, ' with reputation,' from the task of amending Shakespeare. In assigning a reason for this applause of Theobald, Johnson pays a very poor compliment to the penetration of the public, for surely to combat a writer of so much merit and popularity as Pope, was not the plainest road to eminence in the literary world.

• ' It is remarkable that in reviewing my collection, I found ' the word *sea* unexemplified *.' And it is not less remarkable, that the Doctor cannot define this very simple word. He confounds it with ' a lake, the ocean,' &c. an explanation quite worthy of the great man who *discovered* that *Round*, *a.* is ' 1. Cylindrical. 2. Circular. 3. Spherical, orbicular ;' and that the *Pericranium* is ' the membrane which covers the skull !'

' The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topics which will never arise in the commerce of mankind †.' The weakest of Johnson's admirers will blush in reading this passage. The Doctor denies every degree of merit, to every dramatic writer, of every age or nation, Shakespeare alone excepted. This rant is continued through a whole page ; but as the limits of the present essay allow not a longer quotation, the reader is referred to the original.

' In his (Shakespeare's) tragic scenes there is *always something wanting*—NO ‡—' In his comic scenes he is seldom very successful, when he engages his characters in *reciprocations* of smartness, and contests of sarcasm ; their ideas are ' *commonly gross*, and their pleasantry *licentious*.' This accusation is cruel and unjust, as all the world knows already. But much of that preface is an incoherent jumble of reproach and panegyrick §. If any thing can be yet more faulty than what

* Preface to folio dictionary. † Preface to Shakespeare.

‡ ' He has scenes of *undoubted* and *perpetual* excellence.' Ibid. Is there not some inconsistency in these various assertions.

§ See in the same stile his observations on Prior, Akenfide, and others.

what we have just now seen, it is what follows : ' Whenever ' he (Shakespeare) solicits his invention, or strains his faculties, ' the offspring of his *throes* is *tumour* (i. e. *puffy grandeur* *), ' *meannefs, tediousness, and obscurity*. His declamations or set ' speeches are *commonly cold and weak*.' The *set speeches* (as the Doctor elegantly terms them) of Petruchio, of Jacques, of Wolfey, and of Hamlet, are *perhaps* neither cold nor weak. The conclusion of this period is worthy of such a beginning ; he mentions certain attempts from which Shakespeare ' seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his ' reader.' The Doctor himself is an object of pity. Shakespeare has been in his grave near two centuries—His life was innocent—His writings are immortal. To feel resentment against so great a man because his works are not every where equal, is an idea correspondent to the generosity of Johnson.

' Swift in his *petty* treatise on the English language, allows ' that new words *must* sometimes be introduced, but proposes ' that *none* should be suffered to become obsolete†.' The Doctor has not given a fair quotation from Swift. One would imagine that Swift had proposed to retain every word that is to be found in any of our popular authors, but he neither said nor meant any such thing. His words are these : ' They (the members of the proposed society) ' will find many words *that* ' *deserve to be utterly thrown out of our language*.' And the Dean says nothing afterwards that infers a contradiction.

In his account of Lyttleton, the Doctor's good nature is evident. He speaks not a word as to the merit of the history of Henry II. but—' It was published with such anxiety as only *vanity* can dictate.' We are next entertained with a page of dirty anecdotes concerning its publication, which the Doctor seems to have picked up from some printer's journeyman. ' The Persian Letters have something of that indistinct and ' headstrong ardour for liberty which a man of genius *always* ' catches when he enters the world, and *always* suffers to cool ' as he passes forward.' Of the admired monody to the memory of Lady Lyttleton, we are only told that it is *long*.

* Vide dictionary.

† Vide Preface to folio Dict.

‘ His dialogues of the dead were very eagerly read, though the production rather, as it seems of leisure than of study, rather effusions than compositions. The names of his persons too often enable the reader to anticipate their conversation ; and when they have met, they too often part without conclusion.’ These remarks apply with peculiar justice to Johnson’s dictionary, for that work is an *effusion* rather than a *composition*. His reader is for the most part able to anticipate his definitions, and they generally end without conclusion. Lord Lyttleton’s poems ‘ have *nothing* to be *despised*, and *little* to be *admired*.’ But here, as usual, the Doctor contradicts himself, and in the very next line ‘ of his Progress of Love, *it is sufficient blame to say* that it is pastoral. His blank verse in Blenheim has neither much force, nor much elegance. His little performances, whether songs, or epigrams, are sometimes spritely, and sometimes *insipid*’—and of course *despicable*. The candid and accurate author of the Rambler has forgot the existence of that beautiful blossom of sensibility, that pure effusion of friendship, the prologue to Coriolanus.

The life of Dr Young has been written by a lawyer, who conveys the meanest thoughts in the meanest language. His style is dry, stiff, grovelling, and impure. His anecdotes and ideas, are evidently the cud of Dr Johnson’s conversation. He continues in the same fretful tone from the first line to the last. He is at once most contemptuous and contemptible. Whatever he saith is insipid or disgusting. He is the bad imitator of a bad original ; and an honest man will not peruse his libel without indignation. He steps out of his way to remind us of Milton’s *corporal correction*, a story fabricated, as is well known, by his Employer. Johnson himself with all his imperfections, is often as far superior to this unhappy penman, as the author of the Night-Thoughts is superior to Johnson. And yet this critical assassin, this literary jackall, is celebrated by the Doctor*.

‘ Every

* As the venerable and admirable father of the English dictionary has treated the names of such men as Dr Young and Lord Lyttleton with so little ceremony, the reader will perhaps forgive the insertion of his own character, as drawn by Lord Chesterfield. ‘ I am al-

‘ Every man finds his mind more strongly seized by the tragedies of Shakespeare than of any other writer ; others please us by particular speeches, but he always makes us anxious for the event, by exciting restless and *unquenchable* (how can this be) curiosity, and compelling him that reads his work to read it through *.’ But the Doctor overthrows all this within a few pages, for Shakespeare has ‘ *perhaps* not one play, which if it were now exhibited as the work of a contemporary writer, would be heard to the conclusion †.’ The Rambler cannot always suppress his thorough contempt for the taste of the public. He no doubt laughs internally at their folly in admiring him.

Bawd. ‘ A Procurer, or Procurefs.’—To bawd, *v. n.* ‘ To procure.’—Bawdily (from *bawdy*) ‘ obscenely.’—Bawdiness (from *bawdy*) ‘ obsceneness.’—Bawdry, *f.* ‘ 1. A wicked practice of procuring and bringing whores and rogues together. 2. Obscenity.’—Bawdy, *a.* (from *bawdy*) ‘ Obscene, unchaste.’—Bawdyhouse. ‘ A house where traffic is made by wickedness

most in a fever, whenever I am in his company. His figure (without being deformed) seems made to disgrace or ridicule the common structure of the human body. His legs and arms are never in the position, which, according to the situation of his body, they ought to be in ; but constantly employed in committing acts of hostility upon the graces. He throws any where but down his throat, whatever he means to drink ; and only mangles what he means to carve. *Insensitive to all the regards of social life, he misvalues, or misplaces every thing. He disputes with heat, and indiscriminately, mindless of the rank, character, and situation, of those with whom he disputes ; absolutely ignorant of the several gradations of familiarity or respect, he is exactly the same to his superiors, his equals and his inferiors ; and therefore by a necessary consequence absurd to two of the three. Is it possible to love such a man ? No. The utmost I can do for him, is to consider him as a respectable Hottentot.’* Churchill’s account of our hero comes nearly to the same. And the inimitable Dr Smollet, has (I think) intended to exhibit a third picture of this illustrious original in Humphry Clinker, Vol. I.——Johnson’s letter to the Earl of Chesterfield concludes in these words : ‘ Whatever be the event of my endeavours, I shall not easily regret an attempt which has procured me the honour of appearing thus publicly, my Lord, your Lordship’s most obedient, and most humble servant, Sam. Johnson.’ The contrast these extracts afford, between the severity of the polite peer and the humble politeness (*ser. onco*) of the rugged pedant, is striking.

* Preface to Shakespeare,

† Ibid.

‘ wickedness and debauchery.’—Baggage. ‘ A worthless woman.’—Bitch. ‘ 1. The female of the *canine* kind. 2. A name of reproach for a woman.’—Blackguard. ‘ A dirty fellow.’—Block. ‘ A Blockhead.’—Blockhead. ‘ A stupid fellow ; a dolt ; a man without parts.’—Blunderer. ‘ A Blockhead.’—Blunderhead. ‘ A stupid fellow.’—Bloodletter. ‘ *A Phlebotomist*.’—Bertram. ‘ Bastard *pellitory*.’—Suds. ‘ *A Lixivium* of soap and water.’—Sun. ‘ The luminary that makes the day.’

The English dictionary is amazingly defective—*Nervi defunct*. It has no force of thought. It displays a mind, patient, but almost incapable of reasoning; ignorant, but oppressed by a load of frivolous ideas; proud of its own powers, but languishing in the last stage of hopeless debility. We have extolled it with the wildest luxuriance of praise, and we despise the worshippers of the *golden calf*.

No man has done more honour to England, than Mr Locke. What would he have said or thought had Johnson’s dictionary been published in his days? We can easily determine his opinion from several passages in his works. I select the following, because it is both short and decisive; and he who retains any respect for Mr Locke will retain little for the author of the Rambler. His words are these: ‘ If any one asks *what this solidity is* *, I send him to his senses to inform him. ‘ Let him put a flint, or a football between his hands, and ‘ then endeavour to join them *and he will know*. If he thinks ‘ this not a sufficient explication of *solidity*, what it is, and ‘ wherein it consists, I promise to tell him, what it is, and ‘ wherein it consists, when he tells me, what *thinking* is, or ‘ wherein it consists, or explains to me what *extension* or *motion* is, which perhaps seems much easier. The simple ideas ‘ we have are such as experience teaches them us; but *if, beyond that, we endeavour by words to make them clearer* in ‘ the mind, we shall succeed no better, than if we went ‘ about to clear up the darkness of a blind man’s mind by ‘ talking;

* SOLIDITY. ‘ 1. Fullness of matter; *not hollowness*. 2. Firmness; hardness; compactness; *density* ;’ &c. &c. Johnson’s dictionary.

‘talking, and discourse into him the ideas of light and colours *.’

Alluding to the social, facetious, and celebrated Mr Wilkes, Dr Johnson tells us, that ‘Lampoon itself would disdain to speak ill of him, of whom no man speaks well †.’ He fills many pages with blotted variations from Pope’s manuscript translation of the Iliad. He exults in this precious production, and foresees that the wisest of his readers will wish for more. Having read only a few lines of it, I cannot pretend to rate the value of this commodity : But a plain reader will be apt to suspect that the Doctor has on this, as on former occasions, adopted the prudent proverb, *multum reibere, multum solvere*. If Lexiphanes *overflows with Greek*, he may by comparing Pope with Homer, afford much entertainment.

In the title page of his octavo, we learn, that ‘the words are deduced from their originals.’ And in the preface, he adds, that ‘the etymologies and derivations, whether from foreign languages or native roots, are more diligently traced, and more distinctly noted, than in other dictionaries of the same kind.’—Mr Whitaker assures us that in this single article the Doctor has committed upwards of *three thousand* errors : And the historical pioneer produces abundant evidence in support of his assertion ‡. But independent of this curious circumstance, let us ask the Doctor what he means by crowding such trifles into an abstract, which is, he says, intended for those who are ‘to gain degrees of knowledge suitable to lower characters, or necessary to the common business of life.’ To tell such people that the word *porridgepot* is compounded of *porridge*, and *pot*, is to insult their understandings; and of his Greek and Saxon roots, not one individual in a thousand can read even a single letter. The preface sets out with a pitiful untruth. Having mentioned the publication of his folio dictionary, he subjoins, ‘it has since been considered that works of that kind are by no means necessary for the bulk of readers.’ Here he would insinuate that the *abstract* was an *after-thought* : But every body sees that

* Essay, &c. Book II. Chap iv. Sect. 6.

† False Alarm.

‡ History of Manchester, Vol. II.

that its publication was delayed only to accelerate the sale of his folio dictionary. There is not room now left us to dissect every sentence in the preface to his octavo. We shall therefore conclude the subject with one particular, wherein the Doctor's taste, learning, and genius blaze in their meridian.

In the title page to his octavo dictionary we are informed that the words are 'authorised by the names of the writers 'in whose works they are found.' And this tale is repeated at greater length in the preface, where 'it will be found that 'truth requires him to say less :'. For under letter A only there are between four and five hundred words, for which the *Idler* has not assigned any authority—and of these one hundred and eighty are to be found in no language under heaven. He boasts indeed that his dictionary 'contains many words not 'to be found in any other.' But it also contains many words not to be found at all in any other book. If we compute that letter A has a thirteenth part of these *recruits*, we shall find that the whole number scattered through his compilation exceed two thousand. A purchaser of his *abstract* has a title to ask the Doctor why the work is loaded with such mountains of trash? They serve only to testify the folly of him who collected or created them. Men of eminent learning have been consulted, who disown all acquaintance (in English) with almost every single article in the list that follows :

Abacus, Abandonement, Abarticulation, Abcedarian, Abcedary, Aberrant, Aberuncatè, Abject, *v. a.* Ablectate, Ablactation, Ablation, Ablegate, Ablegation, Ablepsy, Abluent, Abrasion, Abscissa, Absinthiated, Abstention, Absterge, Accessariness, Accidentalness, Accipient, Acclivous, Accolent, Accompanable, Accroach, Accustomarily, Acroamatical, Acronycal, Acroters, or Acroteria, Acuate, Aculerate, Addulce, Addenography, Adeumption, Adiaphory, Adjectitious, Addition, Abstergent, Acceptilation, Adjugate, Adjument, Adjunction, Adjunctive, Adjutor, Adjutory, Adjuvant, Adjuvate, Admensuration, Adminicle, Adminicular, Admix, Admonishment, *Admurmuration*, Adscititious, Adstriction, Advesperate, Adulator, Adulterant, Adulterine, Adumbrant, Advolation, Advolution, Adustable, Aerology, Aeromancy, Aerometry, Aerof-

ecopy, Affabrous, Affectuous, Affixion, Affilation, Afflatus, Agglomerate, Agnation, Agnition, Agreeingness, Alate, Abb, Alegar, Alligate, Alligation, Allocution, Amalgmate, Amandation, Ambidexterity, Ambilogy, Ambiloquous, Ambry, Ambustion, Amende, Amercer, Amethodical, *Amphibological*, *Amphibologically*, Amphisch, Amplificate, Amygdalate, Amygdaline, Anacamptick, Anacampticks, *Anaclacticks*, Anadiplosis, Anagogetical, Anagrammatize, Anamorphosis, Anaphora, Anastomosis, Anastrophe, Anathematical, Androgynal, Androgynally, Androgynus, Anemography, Anemometer, *Anfractuoufness*, Angelicalness, *Angiomanospermous*, Angularity, Angularness, Anhelation, Aniented, Aniteness, Anility, Animative, Annumerate, Annumeration, Annunciate, Anomalously, Anfated, Antaphroditick, Antapoplestick, Antanthritick, Antasthmatick, Anteast, Auscultation, Antemundane, Antepenult, Antepredicament, Anthology, Anthroposophy, Anthypnotick, Antichristianity, Auxiliation, Autinephritick, Antinomy, Antiquatedness, Apert, Apertly, Aphilanthropy, Aphrodisiacal, Aphrodisiack; Apocope, Apocryphalness, Apomecometry, Appelatory, Apsis, Aptate, Aptote, Aqua, Aquatile, Aqueousness, Aquose, Aquolity, Araignee, Aratory, Arbuscle, Archchanter, Archaiology, Archaiologick, Archeus, Arcuation, Arenose, Arenulous, Argil, Argillaceous, Argute, Arietate, Aristocraticallness, Armental, Armentine, Armigerous, Armillary, Armipotence, Arrentation, Arreptitious, Arrison, Authentickness, Arroasion, Articular, Articulation, Arundinaceous, Arundineous, Asbestine, Ascriptionous, Asinary, Asperation, Asperifolious, Aspirate, *v. n.* Assassinator, Assumptive, Astonishingness, Astrography, Attiguous, Attituge, Aucupation, Ayowee *.

Let us figure the case that a foreigner sits down to compose a page of English, by the help of Johnson's work. The strange

* Dr Johnson sees not that simplicity is the soul of elegance. Nothing can exceed his merit except his modesty. In defiance of Addison, and a thousand other *shallow fellows*, he asserts that Milton constructed his periods 'on perverse and pedantic principles.' Vide Life of Milton.

strange combinations of letters (for I dare not call them words) which swell his book to its present bloated size are not marked with an asterisk to distinguish them as barbarous: The novice would therefore adopt a style unknown to any native of England. Here is a short specimen of what he would say.

‘ An *Admurmuration* has long wandered about the world, that the pensioner’s political principles are *anfractuous*. Their *anfractuosity*, their *insipience*, and their *turpitude*, are no longer *amphibological*. His *nefarious repercussion* of obloquy must *contaminate*, and *obumbrate*, and who can tell but it may even *aberuncate* his *feculent* and *excrementitious* *celebrity*. His *perspicacity* will see without *comity*, or *hilarity*, that his character as an author and a gentleman, requires *resuscitation*, for it is neither *immane* nor *immarcescible*. This is a *homogeneous* truth *. Let him distend, like the *flaccid* sides of a football †, his *sal*, his *supience*, and his powers of *ratiocination*. The *mellifluous* and *numerosa cadence* of *equiponderant* periods cannot ensure him from a *luxation*, a *laceration*, and a *resiliency* of his *adminicular concatenation* with the *rugged mercantile* race ‡. The loss of this *adscititious adminicle* would make the sage’s *impeccable* bosom vibrate with the horrors of *dilution* and *dereliction*. His organs of vision would gush with *salsamentarious* torrents of spherical particles, of equal diameters, and of equal specific gravities, as Dr Cheyne observes—their smoothness—their sphericity—their frictions, and their hardness, } &c.

To the last edition (the 4th) of the folio dictionary, there is prefixed an advertisement, from which I have extracted a few lines: ‘ Finding my dictionary about to be reprinted, I have endeavoured by a revival to make it less reprehensible. I will not deny that I found many parts requiring emendation, and many more capable of improvement. Many faults I have corrected, some superfluities I have taken away, and some deficiencies I have supplied. I have methodised some parts

* Vide Life of Pope.

† Vide Rambler.

‡ The Booksellers, vide Life of Dryden. § Vid. Dict. art. WATER.

' parts that were *disordered*, and illuminated some that were ' *obscure*. Yet the changes or additions bear a very small ' proportion to the whole.' That his improvements bear a very small proportion to the quantity of errors still in his book is true, for after a long and painful search I have only been able to trace out one alteration. *Gazetteer* is now defined without that insolent scurrility formerly quoted. But in this correct edition, thunder continues to be a *most bright flame*. Whig is still the name of a faction; and a Tory is said to be an adherent to the antient constitution of England. Oats, Excise, *Monarch*, &c. are all in the same stile.—' No- ' wife, *n. f.* (*no and wife* : this is commonly spoken and writ- ' ten by ignorant barbarians, *noways*). Not in any manner, ' or degree.'—Theorem, *n. f.* ' A position laid down as an ' acknowledged truth.'

Here a schoolboy can detect the Doctor's ignorance, for every body knows that this word has the *opposite* meaning, which is indeed evident from the quotations that are intended to exemplify it.

' Having found this the head *theorem* of all their discourses, ' we hold it necessary that the *proofs* thereof be weighed.' *Hooker*.—' Here are three *theorems*, that from thence we ' may draw some conclusions.' *Dryden*.

To piss, *v. n.* (*pisser* Fr. *piissen* Dutch) ' To make water, ' I charge the *pis sing* conduit run nothing but claret, ' *Shakespeare*.—One ass pisses, the rest *piss* for company. ' *L'Estrange*.—The wanton boys *piss* upon your grave. *Dry- ' den*.—Whoredom, *n. f.* (from *whore*) ' Fornication. Some ' let go *whoredom* as an indifferent matter.' *Hale*.—Who- ' rish, *a.* (from *whore*) ' Unchaste, incontinent. By means ' of a *whorish* woman a man is brought to a piece of bread. *Proverbs*.—' I had as lief you should tell me of a mess of ' porridge.'

The reader has seen what a profusion of low and even black- guard expressions are to be met with in this celebrated work. With all his affectation of hard words, the Doctor becomes at once intelligible when he wishes to reprobate a rival genius, or insult the ashes of a benefactor. Speaking of Mr Walsley

he says, ' In this man's house I passed many cheerful and agreeable hours.' But ' he (Mr Walmsley) was a *whig*, with all the virulence and malevolence of his party.*'

I finish this essay by reciting the circumstance which gave it birth.

In 1778, Mr William Shaw published an Analysis of the Gaelic language. He quoted specimens of Gaelic poetry, and harangued on its beauties with the awkward elocution of one who did not understand them. A few months ago he printed a pamphlet. He vilified decent characters. He denied the existence of Gaelic poetry, and his name was echoed in the newspapers as a miracle of candour. Is there in the annals of Grubbean impudence any parallel to this? Is there any nation in the world except *one*, perpetually deluded by a succession of impostors? Are these the fruits of that freedom which patriots perish to defend? If there be no pillory, no whipping post for such accumulated guilt, we may truly say with Shakespeare, that ' Liberty plucks justice by the nose.' This incomparable bookbuilder, who writes a dictionary before he can write grammar, had previously boasted what a harvest he would reap from English credulity †. He was not deceived. The bait was caught; and the voice of truth was for some time drowned in the clamours of the rabble. Mr Shaw wants only money. He thinks only how to get it, and with a courage that is respectable, avowed his intentions. But better things might have been expected from the 'moral and majestic' author of the Rambler. He must have seen the Analysis of the Gaelic language, for Shaw mentions him as patron of the work. He must have seen the specimens of Celtic poetry there inserted. That he is likewise the patron of this poor scribbler, no man on either side will offer to deny. From this single circumstance, the Doctor stands convicted of *an illiberal intention to deceive*.

It will be demanded, why a private individual without interest or connections presumes to interfere in the quarrels of the

* Vide Clark's answer to Shaw, which may deserve to be read, when the libel which it has annihilated will neither be sought nor found.

† Vide Life of Smith.

the learned? But when the most shameless of mankind is *hired* to abuse the character of his countrymen, to blast the reputation of the living and the dead; when *such* a tool is employed for *such* a purpose, that those who are insulted cannot with propriety stoop to a reply,—THEN the highest degree of goodness may degenerate into the lowest degree of weakness, silence becomes approbation, and tenderness and delicacy deserve a different name. He is unfit to be the friend of virtue who cannot defend her honour, who dare not execute her vengeance. In this shameful affair, one circumstance favours Dr Johnson. *His friendship is not exhausted in a compliment.* He does not excite expectation merely to disappoint it. He resembles not some perfidious wretches whom his intrepid eloquence hath so properly pointed out to public indignation. Exerting the generosity which often ennoble the character of an Englishman, he engages not his dependant in a performance for which he scruples to pay.

To glean the tithe of this man's absurdities cannot be of peculiar interest to me: But the world is long since weary of his arrogant pedantry, his officious malice, his detested assiduity to undermine his superiors, and overbear his equals. Reformation is never quite hopeless, and by submitting to make a catalogue of his errors, there is a chance to humble and reform him. Perhaps indeed, like '*The drudges of sedition*', HE will hear in sullen silence, HE will feel conviction without shame, and be confounded, but not abashed.' The author has not arrested a few careless expressions, which, 'in the glow of composition,' will always escape, but by fair, and copious quotations from Dr Johnson's ponderous performances, has attempted to illustrate his covetous and shameless prolixity—his corruptions of our language—his very limited literature—his entire want of general learning—his antipathy to rival merit—his paralytick reasoning—his solemn trifling pedantry—his narrow views of human life—his adherence to contradictions—his defiance of decency—and his contempt of truth. We have not been sporting in the mere wantonness of

• Vide False Alarm.

of assertion. There is adduced such various, such strong, such damning evidence, that the Doctor himself must feel a burst of conviction. To collect every particle of *inanity* which may be found in our *patriot's* works is infinitely beyond the limits of a shilling pamphlet. We stop at present here, but the subject seems *inexhaustible* *!

Though Dr Johnson has on all occasions expressed the utmost contempt and aversion for the Scots, yet they have in general been solicitous to soothe his pride. Dr Smollet says, that 'Johnson, inferior to none in philosophy, philology, and poetry, stands foremost as an essayist, justly celebrated for the strength, dignity, and variety of his style, &c. And Beattie affirms, that his dictionary, considered as the work of one man, is a most wonderful performance! The Doctor's capital enemies have likewise been Caledonians. The great author of *Lexiphanes* was a Scot, and the *Rambler* is yet smarting under the rough but irresistible remarks of a Highland reviewer.

Our ingenious advocate for the second sight (*vid. Tour*) has long been duped by a succession of rascals. Lawder persuaded him to believe that *Paradise Lost* was compiled from scraps of modern Latin poetry; his pamphlet bears strong internal evidence that part of it at least (as has long been alledged) is the production of the Doctor's pen. Compare in particular the preface with such attempts in prose as we know to be Lawder's own. *Vide* Mr Cave's Magazine.

Mr Shaw has of late renewed his *enquiries*. They are only to be regarded as the desperate ravings of a man who suspects that his moral and his literary character have sunk together into final perdition; that his name, like Lawder's, will be remembered only to his infamy, and that, in consequence of the *new light*, Dr Johnson himself despises and abhors him.

Dr Johnson says, that one of the lowest of all human beings is a Commissioner of Excise. This will hardly be the case unless his reverend friend Mr Shaw shall arrive at that dignity. But in the mean time, there is a Commissioner of Excise, or Customs, (no matter which) who in the scale of human beings is not much lower than *Lexiphanes* himself. This couple stand in the most striking contrast; and to draw the character of the first is to write an oblique but most severe censure on the character of the second. Dr Smith's language is a luscious and pure specimen of strength, elegance, precision, and simplicity. His *Enquiry into the wealth of nations* deserves to be studied by every member of the community as one of the most accurate, profound, and persuasive books that ever was written. In that essay he displays an intimate extensive knowledge of mankind from the cabinet to the cottage, a supreme contempt of national prejudice, and a fearless attachment to liberty, to justice, and to truth. His work is admired as a mass of excellence, a condensation of reasonings, the most various, important, original, and just.

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The first of these is the fact that the
 Government has been unable to secure
 the necessary funds to carry out its
 policy of non-interference. This has
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